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RED LIGHT FOR THE SATELLITES

THE curtain has risen in the West, and will soon rise in the East, on what should prove to be the decisive military operations of the war. Resisting stubbornly, but with its left wing enveloped by General Bradley's encircling movement to the Sarthe, the German 7th Army is in a critical situation; and its defeat would mean German collapse in France. On the Vistula, too, the Germans are preparing apparently to risk a decisive battle; while the Russians have been engaged in consolidating their advances in the Baltic States and in Southern Poland, Hitler has rushed to Warsaw a dozen fresh divisions from Rumania, Italy, Norway, Germany and elsewhere. Few Germans, and still fewer in the satellite countries, can believe in the Wehrmacht's ability to avoid catastrophe in the Vistula plains; yet the Reich's junior partners—Finland, Rumania and Bulgaria—still make no decided move to break with the Axis.

The Finns present one of the most baffling psychological problems of this war. They manifestly are adjusting themselves to the certainty that Germany has lost it, but they are doing it with extreme deliberation. This was the meaning of President Ryti's resignation and of the summons to the veteran Marshal Mannerheim to take his place. The role in politics of octogenarian soldiers is commonly to destroy their people's liberties with their senile hands, without fully realising what they are doing. That was the record on both sides of the Rhine of Marshals Hindenburg and Pétain. Mannerheim has an unenviable past behind him, but he did on at least one notable occasion show some independence towards Imperial Germany. His countrymen may expect him to do so again, and the chances are that he will. The fall of Mr. Ryti was a good sign. He went because he had pledged his personal word to Ribbentrop that Finland will in no circumstances make a separate peace. With him the decidedly pro-German Cabinet of Dr. Linkomies has also fallen, and Mannerheim has placed, in the critical post at the Foreign Office, a friend and political ally of Mr. Paasikivi.

This looks like peace, but perhaps it would be more cautious to say that it looks like the resumption of negotiations with Russia. In interpreting Finnish conduct we have to remember that, under democratic forms, there rages a class conflict of exceptional violence, not to say savagery. All through this war the country has been divided. The first result was happily an illogical limitation of the campaign; the Finns fought till they had recovered the territory they lost in the last war; then they grounded arms and stood still. A recent vote in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Diet gave seven votes out of seventeen for peace, and this big minority included both the Social Democrats and the Swedes—the workers and the professional class. The other chief reason is national vanity. Like the Poles, though with rather better grounds, the Finns in Tsarist days regarded themselves as the outposts of Western civilisation and looked down on the Russians as barbarians. They isolated themselves even more completely after the revolution, and were (again like the Poles) wilfully ignorant of the miraculous development which had turned their once backward neighbour into the mighty Power that now dominates Eastern Europe. Out of these illusions events have now shaken the less prejudiced and conservative half of the Finnish nation. But the delays caused by divisions and ignorance may one day exhaust Russian patience. Meanwhile, it seems that the old terms stand, save that the bill for indemnities may be increased. They were generous terms which left Finland's sovereignty intact and took on balance no further territory from her.

If the mind of the dominant Finnish parties is a puzzle, what in this business are we to make of Hitler's strategy? Why does he even now refuse to concentrate his forces for the defence of the Reich? Why, in particular, has he left some ten divisions isolated in Finland, and perhaps as many as thirty in Estonia and Latvia, where they are now cut off on land by the advancing Russian tide? Can any defence be made on military grounds for the decision to sacrifice these forty divisions? It can be argued that Germany, if she is to survive, must hold the Baltic Sea. But it can be held only if she commands it from the air, and this involves the retention of air bases on its islands and coasts. But the Baltic sea routes, valuable chiefly because they give access to Swedish iron ore and Finnish nickel, will be frozen over in late autumn. No; we incline to think that Hitler's strategy turns as usual round prestige: in plain words, it is political and emotional. If Finland rats, the other Eastern satellites will follow her example. Again, the refusal to order any voluntary withdrawal on a considerable scale may be part of the *Götterdämmerung* pose. Defeat this time will be staged as a blazing theatrical spectacle, a massive suicide of the master race. Happily for mankind, neither the average Finn nor the average German soldier outside the ranks of the S.S. is mad enough to persist in this insanity to the bitter end.

The Polish Government

It is regrettable that the *Observer*, which we regard as a staunch ally in many good causes, should have been foxed by what we imagined to be an easily intelligible comparison between Vichy and the Polish Government in London. The comparison, we find, has been well understood by those whose work has made them familiar with the attitude of both Governments. Let us restate the point in unambiguous language. The Polish Government is much as the French Government would have been, if many of those who stayed in France to support the Vichy Government had not had the chance to do so, because the Germans were determined to absorb and destroy, instead of partitioning, France. If these men had come to England, they would have organised resistance to the Germans in France, very much as the Poles have done from England. No one denies the courage of the Poles; it is indeed their most striking national characteristic. But many attached to the Government in London, like the men of Vichy, fear Communism—and in Poland the fear is greatly reinforced by the ancient hostility to Russia—much more than they hate the Nazis. Some go so far as openly to discuss a new war against Russia. Their views, again like the French of Vichy, are Fascist and anti-Semitic, rather than democratic. This does not mean that

there are not many able and amiable individuals among men with this outlook. Our trouble is that their prejudices make them desperately dangerous to the United Nations and the future peace of the world. We were compelled to speak strongly last week by the discovery that some of them were already attempting to prevent an agreement between Mr. Mikolajczyk and the National Committee of Liberation—an agreement which is now dependent on the Polish Government's reaction to the suspended Moscow talks. One further detail. No sooner had Mr. Mikolajczyk left, than the Polish Ministry of Information began to organise a campaign to denigrate members of the National Committee, with whom Mr. Mikolajczyk is trying to reach agreement. The Polish Ministry issued instructions to their propagandists to present this Committee as composed of Communists and nobodies. Here is one example. General Rola-Zymierski is director of the pro-Soviet Underground Movement in Poland. He was the commander of the Polish Underground Movement whilst Sikorski was alive, and only resigned to organise Peoples' Guards when Sosnkowski in London took over the command of all Polish forces, regular and underground. Poles are now instructed to state that he is a criminal who served a penal sentence, and that later he helped the "Spanish Reds." They omit to mention that he served his imprisonment in company with Popil, who is now a member of the present Polish Government in London, and that he was fully exonerated and his rank restored, after a full investigation by a Polish Court of Honour set up by Sikorski. Fortunately there are sensible Poles in London as well as in Poland and these absurdities must not be allowed to interfere with the establishment of an independent and representative Government in Warsaw.

The Australian Referendum

Next Saturday the Australian electors will go to the polls for the eighteenth referendum in the history of the Commonwealth. Mr. Curtin is staking a great deal on this attempt to secure extended Federal powers during the period of reconstruction. It is a risky project, for all but three of the referendums have been defeated, and even those that were successful dealt only with relatively minor constitutional issues. This time, however, there is a great deal of controversy. The relations between the State and Federal governments are as clearly defined and the rights and privileges of each as jealously guarded as are those of their counterparts in the U.S.A. Mr. Curtin has plainly said that he thinks that it will be impossible adequately to deal with post-war problems if things are left as they are. He has requested fourteen new laws. These would permit the Federal Government to deal with employment questions; with market controls; with the role of monopolies in production and intra-State commerce; with control of overseas exchange and investment and with civil aviation, a matter with which the Commonwealth can at present treat only with the permission of the States. Besides these matters, the new proposals cover public works, national health, social security and the treatment of the aborigines. It is clear from this brief list that Mr. Curtin is anticipating considerable post-war advances in Australia, which the Labour Party and other progressive groups have no wish to see hamstrung by the cry of "State's rights." But little effective progress can be made unless these proposals are accepted. This referendum, therefore, is a crucial issue in Australian politics. To secure the necessary majority of electors and States, both of which are necessary, will be no easy task. Mr. Curtin, however, is sensibly avoiding any attempt to make it a party issue, and he is backed by some, if not all, of the Opposition leaders.

Temporary Housing

The more the Government's scheme for promoting the erection of Portal houses is studied, the more incredible does it seem that Parliament will ever pass the Housing (Temporary Accommodation) Bill in anything like its present form. The Minister of Health admits that the steel houses themselves can only be classed as "substandard bungalows." There are weighty objections against erecting, for a period of use which may greatly exceed ten years, a two-bedroom house whose superficial area is only 616 square feet (as compared with the Dudley Committee's recommended minimum of 900 square feet), and against ceilings which provide only 7½ft. of headroom. It is questionable, too, whether good value will be obtained by spending £150 millions on houses which professedly are to be scrapped so soon. But the real gravamen of the charge against the Minister of Health is that his scheme seems likely to sabotage every attempt made by local authorities to plan permanent housing. These bungalows will be extremely extravagant in terms of site space. Where are they to be erected? If on blitzed sites or in non-blitzed areas acquired by local authorities for planned reconstruction, permanent housing schemes on these areas will be blocked. Moreover, in relation to plumbing, painting and flooring, the Portal houses will compete for building labour which will be required for permanent types of housing. It almost looks as if, in this scheme, Mr. Willink had sought to discredit the State in the rôle of housing entrepreneur. But perhaps this is just what the Government wants to do.

Highland Development

In a letter to the *Times*, the chairman of the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board defends the Loch Sloy and Loch Morar hydro-electric projects, and by implication all future projects of the Board in the Highlands, on the ground that —apart from the debatable question whether "amenities" will be impaired—the schemes are required to make good "the shortage of electric power in Scotland." This falsification of the needs of the Highlands is dealt with cogently in a pamphlet, *The Highlands of Scotland: Proposals for Development*, by Hugh Quigley. He shows that, whatever may be the merits of the Hydro-Electric Board as a means for protecting the Highlands against unregulated exploitation by large-scale capital, existing undertakings in the Highlands already produce enough low-cost electricity to meet the needs of any probable expansion of general industrial activity in the North. What the Hydro-Electric Board is planning to do is to provide cheap, bulk supplies of electricity which can only be used by electro-metallurgical plants, whose establishment in the Highlands, with the assistance of this indirect subsidy, will do little or nothing for Highland employment. The real solution for the economic future of the Highlands—organised *tourisme*, with small-scale local industries based on the limited natural resources of the area—is not helped, and, indeed, may be gravely prejudiced by the Board's projects.

PARLIAMENT : War Report

"SERENE" was one word applied by the American Press to the Prime Minister's valedictory summer review of the war situation. It had indeed an amplitude of scope and manner which indicated, perhaps, that the speaker's worst anxieties were past; it lacked neither its fascinating sidelights nor its *longueurs*. More than half of it was purely a military report; the flying bomb was not dismissed too cursorily; less than one-third was "political."

There were two specific intimations of good hope: (1) "I no longer feel bound to deny that victory may come, perhaps, soon"; (2) "I am increasingly led to believe that the interval between the defeat of Hitler and the defeat of Japan will be shorter—perhaps much shorter—than I at one time had supposed." Historians, assessing the strategy of this war, may well seize on Mr. Churchill's admission that the invasion across the Channel was "impossible in 1943, owing to our having chosen the Mediterranean . . ." On the other hand, he claimed that neither the experience nor "the tackle" would have been available earlier. He spoke of the uncertain weather, "like a vulture poised in the sky." His vivid description of the 5-minute disembarkation of an entire heavy battery, with his comment that he hoped the possibilities of this would not be "altogether lost upon our own people in the days when many of us have handed over our burdens to others," will no doubt be *locus classicus* in future arguments on defence expenditure. There were generous tributes to the Press ("often ahead of the official news") and to de Gaulle, and the familiar tank skirmish with Stokes. Russia's attitude to Poland seemed to Mr. Churchill "very reasonable." But Russia, he implied, had better not meddle with British policy towards Greece, on which "we intend to fight . . . in the House. . . . By fight I mean argue, and then, if necessary, vote." M. Papandreou, he added, was a new Venizelos.

Mr. Churchill's last incursion into ideology seemed to have scared him off it for a time. He disposed somewhat flippantly of the temptation to expound "the general layout" of the coming peace. Nazi and Fascist systems, however, are to be "laid low"; and then "there may be a new brotherhood among men . . . based upon broad, simple, homely ideals of peace, justice and freedom." This time there was no mention of Spain; it was not made clear to Members whether Falangism was to be laid low or admitted to the broad, simple, homely camp. On France there was an apt quotation from Trotsky: "The destiny of a great nation has never yet been settled by the temporary condition of its technical apparatus." There was a rapid rhythmical coda, and this massive performance ended without any allusion—such as would surely have been contained in a comparable speech by Roosevelt, Hitler, or General Montgomery—to God.

It was a genuine thrill for stay-at-home Members to hear, next but one after Churchill, a first-hand account of D-day from Commander Prior, who paid particular tribute to the precision and seamanship of the landing-craft crews—"amateurs all." Members were further moved when this vigorous Conservative Member concluded his short speech by reading a message from his godson, lately killed south of Caen: "Tell my godfather . . . that our future generations must not only become citizens of the British Empire but citizens of the world." Seymour Cocks gave a useful analysis of the shadier Balkan monarchies, and eulogised Wallace's Common Man; on which Pickthorn said "If we are to have many more common men like Mussolini, Hitler, and Laval—who were all very common men when I was young—managing world affairs, I for one do not . . . expect much improvement." He also produced this more valuable epigram: "When people complain of cynicism among young people, what they are really complaining about is that those young people are sceptical about their particular type of boloney." Several Labour Members challenged the Government's policy towards Greece. Eden said that supplies to E.A.M. had not been stopped; Aneurin Bevan said that Eden was not a liar but that "he has been so long in the Foreign Office that he presents a facet of the facts so selective as to constitute an untruth."

Breaking-up day was the usual inconsequent pot-pourri. The most important of its several debates were on Service pay, allowances, and pensions, and on the *Daily Worker* war correspondent; Womersley and Grigg were respectively and uniformly grudging and unbudging—Grigg upsetting poor Mr. Mathers, who was bursting with the Forth Road bridge, by overrunning his time in some highly personal autobiographical digressions. Members went away in the general hope that good and major news would curtail their recess; but A. P. Herbert moaned, *à propos* of the N.F.S. Indemnity Bill, that "one more ghastly illiteracy" had been added to the Statute Book.

Mr. Speaker: "The matter is quite beyond our control."

PONTIFEX MINOR

GERMANY INSIDE EUROPE

s most of us have our own variants of Mr. urchill's ingenious phrase about the war with rmany being over sooner than we have the t to expect. In that case we have the right xpect the Allied Governments to tell us what y intend to do after the collapse of Germany. he public is left to speculate in the dark, there s grave danger that the passions and propa- da of victory will create a mood that prohibits e and consistent policies. The authoritative moirs of the events of 1918-19 provide plenty warning. They describe how the sudden col- se of Germany took the Allies by surprise, w statesmen one after another were rushed o saying things which embarrassed them rwards, and from which, hedge as they might, y could not withdraw. In *Aftermath* Mr. urchill recalls that he himself, the Cabinet and, ove all, Mr. Lloyd George, were overwhelmed the "unpent feelings" of the public, "which s lashed by the popular Press into fury." They mmitted themselves to ludicrous proposals, ich soon proved as impracticable as the level- ded knew them to be at the time, but which ved effectively to queer the pitch for more er and realistic projects.

In the absence of a coherent world scheme, blicists and newspapers have already begun to ur out plans on the assumption that the object the settlement is to destroy Germany. With ch new revelation of Nazi sadism—and there ve been many recently—the temptation grows concentrate on the idea of punishing Germany, thout recalling that, however foul and bestial e record of Hitler's Reich is—and it could rcely be worse—Germany is an essential part Europe, and contains many millions of ordinary man beings with whom we shall all have to e and work in the future. Exactly the same pe of emotional propaganda appeared in 1918-19 exactly the same papers, and it was those very pers which, when Hitler came to power, were ost anxious to treat him with the most distin- ished and friendly consideration. Let the public ware of being again deceived by their righteous ger. Let every proposal to cut Germany up, deport German populations, to destroy German dustries and so forth, be considered not on the iterion of whether they will hurt Germans, but hether they will serve the interests of peace and osperity in Europe—not forgetting that Britain part of Europe.

Let us begin with a simple, but surely un- swerable, proposition. At the end of this war ermany will be completely helpless. Bled white the folly and wickedness of her Government, ccupied by enemies, whose populations and terri- ries she has devastated, tortured and massacred, r towns reduced to rubble and her industries stroyed, Germany cannot in any circumstances nstitute a menace for years, and probably for any years, to come. Whether she ever does ain become a menace depends, therefore, not n what the Allies do to her when she is helpless, t whether they agree on a policy about which ey will still be in agreement five, ten, twenty ars hence. No punishment, however drastic, n prevent Germany from again becoming a reat Power, if the Allies, falling out amongst emselves, as they did after 1919, again seek to uild up her resources against each other. On the her hand, if the Allies remain united and watch- l, there is no way in which Germany can become angerous, whatever we do now. Half the con- oversial nonsense now being bruited about would e avoided if people would remember that Ger- an rearmament after the last war was made ossible, first, because it paid Business in America nd Britain to satisfy her demand for arms, and econdly, because it was the policy of some of he Allies to foster German strength in the belief would be used against Russia. In brief, the roblem is not Germany, but world anarchy.

On a few points, the Allied Governments seem lready committed. Germany will be occupied by the armies of the United Nations. We believe that some details of this occupation were decided upon at Teheran. It is to be hoped that the occupation will be joint, not regional. It would be well if British, American, Russian and other allied troops were mingled in different parts of Germany; otherwise the promise of an international force growing out of the present military Alliance may be frustrated and the possibilities of friction between the Allies will be greatly increased. What else do we know? That Germany is to be thoroughly disarmed. Here everyone agrees. But there are a score of rival proposals for enforcing disarmament. One of the most popular is that Germany should be divided into three or more parts. We are not sure whether these proposals merely envisage decentralising Germany so that she shall again, as much as possible, resemble the weak confederation which Bismark unified into an Empire, and whether those, who propose the more drastic step of refusing to allow Germany to have any central government at all, have asked themselves for how many years America, Britain and Russia will be prepared to keep garrisons to enforce this artificial separatism, and whether permanent garrisons in the heart of Germany are compatible with the economic prosperity of us all. We have also to consider that unless some other constructive outlet is allowed them, young Germans growing up in an occupied country will necessarily regard it as their patriotic duty to get rid of foreign armies and reunite the Fatherland. This patriotism is not a German, but a universal characteristic, which we should certainly expect from ourselves if we were the defeated and occupied country. Discussions about the "re-education of Germany" are mainly futile until we decide the environment in which young Germany is to grow up. German youth will admire British liberty or Russian efficiency and planning or fall back on their own evil traditions—that depends on Britain, Russia, and the success of world and European organisation. If the economic life of Germany is integrated into the general structure of European organisation, then the problems are soluble. It might then be possible to make new groupings of industrial life in Europe so that the economic welfare of Germans would no longer be purely German, but would be bound up with those of neighbouring States.

The object, however, is not to split Germany, but to see that its resources are used for peace and not for war. If the great dynamo of industrial energy, which overlaps from the Ruhr and the Rhineland into Belgium, France and Luxemburg, were taken over by an international Consortium and used as a source of supply for the reconstruction of devastated Europe, from the Ukraine to Cologne, the real power of Germany would have passed from those industrialists who have so efficiently served the German war machine, and the shape of German economy would have been transformed. Once again, however, any such far-reaching proposal which would really be effective in reducing German power is dependent on the creation of a world organisation capable of controlling the allocation of primary resources.

One of the most sober documents published on the future of Germany has just been issued by a committee set up by the Liberal Party. It makes a number of proposals worthy both of elaboration and examination about the post-war control of raw materials and minerals. It relies on two basic principles, that Germany must not again be allowed a military force strong enough to "permit her to contemplate the possibility of successful aggression," and, secondly, that "Germany must not be treated worse than other nations as regards economic, finance and welfare matters." These principles exactly conform to the interpretation given by Mr. Churchill of the Atlantic Charter. Germany, he said, must be well and truly disarmed, but not impoverished. If, without any scheme of European integration, millions of Germans are thrown out into a largely de-industrialised Germany, which is also greatly reduced in size, while hundreds of thousands of German workers are conscripted for labour abroad, how can this promise be fulfilled? Since the economic life of European nations is interdependent, the only result will be to impoverish the whole Continent, and not only Germany. This brings us back once more to those "international agencies" to which Mr. Roosevelt has spoken, and which are a necessary part of any scheme of world organisation. So far, apart from the promising beginning at Hot Springs, the public has heard little of any agencies which are to give prosperity to the "common man." No doubt they too are being discussed in the United States to-day. Without such practical evidence of the capacity of the great Allies to work together, the announcement of some new form of League of Nations will not carry much conviction. For if there is one thing that we have all learnt from the melancholy story of Geneva, it is that you do not get an authority that is capable of preventing war merely by a Constitution, however nicely phrased. If the world Council and Assembly of which Mr. Churchill has spoken are merely to meet when an "emergency" arises, if it only exists to maintain the status quo, and does not provide for a practical constructive policy through which the nations may learn to work together, then once again the whole edifice will topple, and we shall find ourselves asking from which quarter to expect the first rocket shell.

Innumerable questions arise as soon as we talk of a world organisation, and there is at least good reason to hope this time that the United States will play its part, and that the new League will not be a pawn in the political campaign for the Presidency. Mr. Roosevelt has done his best to take the issue out of party politics, and the better Democrats and Republicans are with him in this object. But it would be rash to prophesy the extent of American commitment. There is to be an international judiciary. Are the big Powers prepared to honour its decisions and to submit great issues to its judgment? There is to be some form of international police force. How is it to be constituted, and how will it operate? What sort of permanent institutions and International Secretariat will the new organisation have? What will be the relation in this body of the great Powers to the smaller Powers, and of the smaller Powers to those Powers who, though by no means great, would not consider themselves small? These and a score of other central issues must be settled. But the peace of the world and the success of the organisation does not primarily rest on immediately finding the right answer to all of them. It rests on the practical test of the capacity of the Allied Powers to restart the everyday life of the world on hopeful lines. Peace depends far more on prosperity and employment than on any League Constitution. If, for instance, the oil agreement between the United States and Britain (details of which we have not yet seen) is turned into a world agreement, satisfactory to Russia and other interested countries, then a real contribution will have been made.

We cannot avoid this "functional" approach, for we are faced with the urgent necessity of reaching working agreements about aviation, communications, food, public health, rebuilding—and they must be done internationally. Have the Powers decided how to reconstruct a Europe in which common men who have endured the agonies of war can see a prospect of peace and a progressively decent life? If there is a general customs union for Europe, if the economic life and the basic services of the Continent overlap frontiers and the standard of living begins slowly to improve after the first stages of relief and rehabilitation are over, then there is a hope of peace in Europe, and we shall have begun to solve the problem of Germany. Taken by itself the problem of Germany is insoluble; as part of the world puzzle before us, it is seen to be no more than one awkward and angular piece which we have to fit into its right place.

WILL HOLLAND BE LIBERATED?

[From a Correspondent]

As the prospect of Germany's defeat grows more close, the problem of the future government of the liberated countries becomes far more actual and urgent. The division between the resistance movements within the occupied countries and the émigré Governments here has long been apparent; in the cases of Greece and Yugoslavia, for instance, it has been an open and acute political controversy. The position in the countries of the western seaboard of the Continent, however, has been but little discussed in this country. The problem is different in every case. Let us begin by considering the position of the Dutch.

Two facts will immediately strike the inquirer. The first is that the present Dutch Government now contains very few members who represent the Dutch people. It was a weak Government when it first came here, and recent appointments of Big Business nominees have scarcely increased its democratic character. The second fact which strikes us is that whereas the underground press of France,, Norway, Poland, and most other countries in which the resistance movement exists, has been extensively quoted in this country, very little indeed is known here of the really progressive clandestine Dutch press—a fact which is all the more odd when we realise that, unlike the newspapers of Belgium and other countries, all the best known Dutch papers continued to function under Nazi control. The clandestine press therefore would seem to be even more important in the case of Holland than in other countries. That it is not printed here is due to the censorship by the Dutch authorities themselves.

We must enquire who are the people who have actual control of Dutch policy. Everyone knows that the Queen is a powerful, popular and astute ruler, but Queens must have advisers, and many Dutch people are extremely disturbed about the record of at least one of the Queen's personal advisers. This is a Mr. Van't Sant, who was once Chief of Police at The Hague, and who retired in circumstances that were never fully investigated. He turned up again in this country in May, 1940, shortly after Queen Wilhelmina and her Government arrived in London, and there are many Dutchmen who believe that it is Van't Sant's ambition to become the Director-General of Police in Holland after the liberation. They feel sure that he would make a very efficient Fouché.

The weakness of the Dutch Government is best illustrated by its failure to resist the impact of Big Business, which is not—as it was in Holland—restricted or counterbalanced by public opinion in Parliament and press. The only Dutch newspaper in London is a joint enterprise of the Royal Dutch Shell, Unilever (Lever Brothers), and Philips Lamps. Recently Dr. H. P. L. Wiessing, who had a fine progressive record in Holland, has been dismissed from the editorship of *Vrij Nederland*. The real reason seemed to everyone to be his signature attached to a manifesto exposing neo-Fascist tendencies in Dutch Government circles.

The President-Director of Unilever, Mr. Paul Rijkens, a vice-president of the Government's Advisory Council, formed a number of committees to study post-war problems. One important question was the return to Holland of the 400,000 labourers who were forced to work in Germany. It was feared that they would cause disturbances on their return. The Government appointed as Commissioner for the return of those exiles Mr. F. G. Ferwerda (one of the managing directors of Unilever). In the meantime the Rijkens committee on constitutional reform discussed the question of the set-up in Holland immediately after the Government's return. They decided that Parliament should not be summoned because its members were elected under quite different circumstances and could not be trusted to leave the Government the necessary freedom to act. The Committee came to the conclusion that instead of the obsolete Parliament an advisory body should be appointed by the Government because it would for a long time be impossible to organise elections.

The Government followed the advice of the Committee and made many drafts for Royal Decrees which all agreed on the point that the States-General (Parliament), and the elected representative bodies of the municipalities and the provinces should not be summoned. Instead, power should be laid in the hands of the military authorities under military rule, which would suspend the freedom of the press and the freedom to organise meetings. For the exercise of the military authority the Army itself was considered unfit. Under the provisional leadership of a regular Colonel a number of business men and civilian government officials were to be given temporary military commissions. It was proposed that this group of experts, under the supervision of the Government, should rule liberated Holland. The second-in-command is a banker, Mr. Posthumus Meyes, who is a close friend and collaborator of the Government's financial adviser, Dr. J. W. Beyen (one of the managing-directors of Unilever). In a recent meeting of the members of the Military Authority the painful problem of disarming the Dutch partisans was discussed.

It was Unilever's policy to encircle but not to enter the Government. The Board of Directors of Unilever is a Government in itself; it even has a Foreign Office. The policy of the Billiton Mining Company, which controls mining interests in the Netherlands East Indies and in the Western Hemisphere has been different. One of their directors, Jonkheer Michiels van Verduynen, was first made a member of the Cabinet without portfolio. After that another director, Jonkheer Van Lidt de Jeude, became the Minister of War. They then had as many members in the Cabinet as the strongest political party in Holland. (The Catholics, who are more than 30 per cent. of the population.) But they did not relax before their managing director, Mr. Van den Broek, was appointed to the key position of Minister of Finance. Mr. Van den Broek recently took over the Department of Commerce and Industry in addition so that every possible channel of interference with private enterprise after the war should be efficiently blocked.

Royal Dutch Shell stayed aloof at first since it did not need to occupy posts to exercise influence. But when the Minister of Shipping, Mr. Kerstens, wanted the shipowners to share financially sacrifices endured, till then, physically only by the seamen, the Shell with its large tanker fleet headed the opposition of the shipowners against those "socialist" plans. This pressure group recently succeeded in replacing Mr. Kerstens by Mr. De Booy, shipping director of Shell.

This undemocratic control of their Government alarms many patriotic Dutchmen. Many who, for the sake of unity, had been reticent about what was going on in and around their Government, began to see the outlines of a scheme to replace German fascism by a new brand of Dutch "Managerial" fascism.

They saw with alarm the encirclement of the Government and the occupation of important posts by the new managers. They had no confidence in the Prime Minister, Professor Gerbrandy, who took office against the will of his party, the Calvinists, and therefore did not represent anybody. Gerbrandy had succeeded Jonkheer de Geer, who was Prime Minister when the Netherlands was invaded and who thought that by bringing the Government to England he could improve his bargaining position *vis à vis* Germany of whose victory in 1940 he felt certain. When the mood of the English people (and that matter of Queen Wilhelmina) appeared be different he had to resign and he returne Holland where he lives now ostracised by Dutch people.

Gerbrandy is an ambitious little man of parliamentary experience. He failed to st up against the many attempts to encroach u the concept of democratic ministerial resp sibility. No doubt he had good reasons for wanting back a Parliament which would certa start an investigation of Government po during the years of exile. When the undergro press in Holland protested against the institu of the Military Government Gerbrandy t to soothe them by declaring that it would be military. When the underground p unanimously clamoured for the immed reassembly of Parliament he tried to reass them by a statement through Radio Ora The Queen, however, dissociated herself fr the plans of the Government by declaring t she would not sign any Decree concern the government after liberation without f consulting the leaders of the people in liberated Holland. The Government then w drew their plans, and replaced the Minister of Interior by a Mr. Burger, a political nonen who recently escaped from Holland. H nomination—he was first Minister without Po folio before it was found that he could be trus with the Department of the Interior—dre from the underground press a statement th they had no confidence in him.

Dutch circles in London, which in priva have long protested, realise now that they can go on being blackmailed into reticence when t vital interests of the Dutch people are at stake. It should be noticed that their criticism of the Ge brandy Government does not apply to its fore and colonial policy. They feel certain that t policy of defending the rights of small nations h the unanimous support of the Dutch people.

But they have lost their confidence in the pla of the Government for the liberation Holland. They see the outline of a fascist pl to suppress possible popular movements. Th fear that the intentions of Van't Sant and of t big concerns with their Military Authority, which the key posts (provincial governorships, etc have been given mainly to obedient or eve sleepy representatives of the concerns, form pattern for an autocratic government by a ne fascist clique. They know that some peopl in this clique are hoping that Prince Bernhar will head the Military Authority and the —rathe small—Dutch Army, in order that the stron regime they wish for should be closely linke with the revered House of Orange. But ca the Prince be trusted by this clique? Afte having been a member of certain Nazi-organis tions in Germany he completely changed h political outlook upon his marriage to Princes Juliana and he is now counted on as a staunch defender of democracy.

The Dutch neo-fascist clique in London wi not have any force at its disposal to realise it aims unless it can use the liberating Allied Armies They might be induced to do its dirty work i Britain and America remain ignorant about th local issues because the patriotic Dutch i London have too long kept silence.

When the dust of battle settles, Dutchmen finding their country destroyed, would deplor but accept the necessity. But, not finding the liberty restored, they would return to the method they sadly but very effectively learned under Ger man occupation; they would not tamely submit.

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A LONDON DIARY

OPLE who talk about political "apathy" in Forces have got hold of the wrong end of the k. Where there is no educational opportunity re is impatience and bewilderment, but, I think we shall discover after the war, thing that can be called apathy. Take the dence of a young airborne officer who was talk- to me the other day. "The men," he said, ave no use for the present political parties. ey will want things done after the war." ings done? "Re-housing, Beveridge and the t of it—and no shilly-shally or half-measures." d if they won't trust the present parties, they l find new leadership? Yes. But if the bour Party were rejuvenated? That, he said, uld be the thing. Only, make no mistake, would jolly well have to be rejuvenated.

* * *

Contrast the experience of a friend who went wn recently with a novel kind of Brains Trust a R.A.F. camp. The Education Officer estioned each of the three visitors about them- ves and their interests and each of them was n put through a close examination by members a large voluntary audience. The questions re searching. Two of the Brains Trust had fairly easy time discussing film production d general political topics. But the third, a earch economist, who embarked rather gingerly difficult explanations of inflation, full employ- nt and international finance, found these men and W.A.A.F.'s following him through most intricate arguments. What was the portance of the Bretton Woods agreement? ow could the development of backward coun- es be assisted by loans? What was Keynes' ntribution to economic theory? From the y the Education Officer linked these points previous discussions it was clear that the camp s enthusiastic about education. Every hut has discussion group meeting regularly and ficially. There is a good and growing library, ith it is a permanent exhibition on topical issues e the progress of the war, home affairs and construction. Part of it is devoted to an ex- bition of paintings by one of the sergeants on e site; elsewhere there is a "Parliament rner," with a special table set aside for *Hansard*. bove this a poster emphasises the importance informed interest in the business of the Com- ons and urges its readers to complete their ting registration forms. Over ninety per cent. the men and a large number of the women ve already done so. Where you have such a rious and enlightened approach to political fairs, apathy is the exception.

* * *

I never heard a nightingale in better voice, or do I remember one singing so close to my oor. All the garden throbbed with music and was beginning to think I found in it some of the agic that was there for Keats, when, suddenly, e bombers came. Scores of them roaring ose overhead and others following in quick ccession as the earlier flights faded out in the istance. In the quieter intervals I still strained hear the nightingale; it sang on unperturbed nd I heard for a time the perfect symbol of the orld at war—the song of the nightingale faintly udible under the deadly drumming of the ombers. When the nightingale flew on to a ore distant tree it was not the noise that dis- rbed her, but my friendly shadow trying to eep a little closer.

* * *

In the last fortnight, staying both in Oxford nd Cambridge, I have asked myself how far ey would be changed by five years of war. hey were not bombed during the Baedeker aids; some say because Hitler had not decided hether to live in Christ Church or Trinity. he undergraduates are very young indeed, but, seems to me, more mature and intellectually etter poised than older students in my day. In eneral the Universities seem to me little changed. But there is one infernal new factor which makes it difficult to inquire or think or study or observe. Training aircraft fly just over the roof tops with a roar that is wicked and purposeless. We have to put up with a lot and say nothing during the war, because in truth military necessity does come first, but there cannot, I think, be any reason for a pilot to circle continuously round Johns or to practice turns between Old Tom and the towers of All Souls. I am told the noise was at its worse when the unfortunate students were sitting for their exams. The nuisance of course extends far beyond university cities and it will no doubt continue after the war unless someone has the courage, without any offence to the R.A.F., to demand, in the most decisive way, that no aircraft should ever be allowed to fly low over houses or populated areas unless it has to do so to land on an airdrome.

* * *

This problem of noise is not only a highbrow concern. It cuts deep into the sickness of our civilisation. Always distraction and never thought; always noise and never stillness or privacy. I was pleased not long ago in a railway train to hear a R.A.F. officer himself raise this problem of reducing the noise of aircraft. He thought it technically difficult because, even if you can persuade the manufacturer and the pilot to cut down noise at the price of some speed and power (which you could do with no disadvantage in time of peace) you are still left with the noise of the propeller. When I ask about jet propulsion, I am told that that may be the solution, but that it will be some years before jet-propelled planes will be in common use. And what about the private man's helicopter, I ask? What about adding to the road horrors, of which I wrote last week, by having the enthusiastic pilot descending on us, voluntarily or accidentally, like a buzz-bomb, out of the skies? Speed mania in a small country like this will be even worse in the sky than on the roads. Obviously no aircraft will be possible in built-up areas, though private and public flying will soon be the most popular way of travel from one great city or country to another. Having myself hopped over the Atlantic in a night, I never want to travel to the United States by any other route. But the problem of preserving privacy and stillness in our island cannot be left to chance; as in other things if we do not control its development from the start, we shall have vested interests and popular habits formed which will not be overcome except by years of accidents, noise, misery and death, and all the other attendant evils of uncontrolled, machine development.

* * *

I was very much disturbed when I saw the story about Frank Ryan in last week's *Reynolds*. Ryan was one of the outstanding figures amongst the brave men who went to fight for the Republican Government in the Spanish Civil War. He took with him a group of Irish volunteers, mainly comrades from the days of Ireland's own internal troubles, in which he had played a big part. Nobody except Goebbels or Franco could pretend that he was a Communist. He was a sincere Catholic, but he hated clerical-Fascism, in Spain, as in his own country. Before he was taken prisoner by the Fascists he had risen to the rank of major, and was so prominent a democrat that, in 1938, he was sentenced to death. Most of us who were associated with the Spanish democrats can remember the passionate protests that this sentence evoked, and to good purpose, for it was commuted to thirty years' imprisonment. Now it is suggested that, after all, Ryan has been killed. The last news of him that was at all reliable came in 1940. He sent a message by a fellow-prisoner about to be released, implying that he was about to be shot whilst "attempting to escape"—a too familiar Fascist tag. Then there were rumours that he had been seen in different parts of the world; the Eire authorities hinted that Ryan "was up to something again." Finally, last Christmas, a friend of Ryan's in America received a card in what looked like his writing. The International Brigade Association had a photographic copy compared with copies of genuine letters by a handwriting expert, who thought the card was a forgery. Meanwhile, the American police had seized the original card from the man who had received it! Obviously, somebody is anxious to suggest that Ryan is still alive, if only to prevent inquiries that might be too searching. The Eire Government has so far not been very anxious to find out what has happened to him, and the Duke of Alba, Franco's Ambassador in London, has declined to have anything to do with the case of a man who went to Spain "to fight for Communism against Christendom." Many people are disappearing without a trace these days, but it is the business of the Eire Government to find out if Ryan is alive and, if so, where he is.

* * *

A month ago, I wrote about a letter said to have been circulated by the Archbishop of Winnipeg offering a guarantee of salvation to Catholic soldiers killed in battle, if their parents had enrolled them in a particular organisation and paid the appropriate fee. Angry Catholics wrote to me, protesting that the letter was a forgery—or that I had quoted passages out of context. This journal published one of these letters, written by Father Heenan of East Ham, who made a categorical and *a priori* denial that Archbishop Sinnot had been guilty of "the heresy and chicanery" with which I had charged him. Father Heenan was filled with righteous indignation at my "credulity," and offered to give a year's subscription of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION to someone in the Forces if the letter were proved to be genuine. We then stated that copies of the letter were in this office and could be inspected. But no one has yet taken the trouble to do this. I am not anxious for Father Heenan to write "the humble withdrawal" that he promised if he was wrong. But am I to assume that he and the *Catholic Herald* columnist who also "gravely doubted the authenticity" of the document, are giving us the case by default?

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to L. Lacey.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The sale of bedding was interrupted for a moment by the somewhat previous announcement that the German Air Force had surrendered, and, after brief but quite credulous applause, feather beds were sold for 10s., mattresses with pillows and bolsters from £3 5s. to £5, a cannon for 25s., and a pair of stuffed pheasants in a case 5s.—*The Worksop Guardian.*

Reuter's special correspondent in cable from Allied H.Q., Italy, said "Fall of Florence is imminent and is likely to remain so for some time."—Portsmouth *Evening News.*

In part of Southern England, where mixed heavy A.A. batteries are fighting the incoming flying bombs 24 hours a day, there is another battle raging. It is being fought by people who just don't like noise—whether it be flying bombs or Ack-Ack guns. So far more than a dozen have briefed solicitors, who are requesting that the military authorities be asked to move the gunners.—*News Chronicle.*

With the loss of Avranches the German forces along the whole of the line from Caumont are out on a limb. The west end of the limb is in the air as the German Command makes one unsuccessful attempt after another to anchor it somewhere on the seaboard. This left flank is being rolled up, with immense possibilities for the future.—*News Chronicle.*

RUSSIA'S FAMILIES

(By Cable from our Moscow Correspondent)

THE new Soviet laws of July 8th governing marriage, divorce and parenthood, continue to provide one of the main topics among Russians; for, in one way or another, practically every citizen is affected by them. There is universal agreement about grants, allowances and medals for mothers with many children, the only dissentients being a few wits who advocate similar medals for fathers. The principle of family grants was, of course, already established by the law of 1936, which also abolished abortion—except for reasons of health—and slightly increased divorce fees, which formerly had been nominal. It is generally recognised that after the casualties at the front and in the occupied regions and the absence of millions of men from home for more than three years, a population drive is absolutely necessary. As for the "Motherhood Medal," the "Order of Glorious Motherhood," and the honourable title of "Mother Heroine," the Soviet citizen—who by now is extremely "medal conscious"—sees nothing incongruous in that.

Public opinion also fully endorses the new provisions for unmarried mothers. Single women are to get a monthly allowance, or pension, not merely for the fourth child, as with married mothers, but also for the first, second and third. This allowance, moreover, is to be paid for twelve years instead of five. The unmarried mother will also have the right to place the child in an orphanage (where the State, instead of giving a pension, will accept full care of its needs) and reclaim it whenever she wishes. It is not disclosed whether the mother registering a birth will, as formerly, be required to give the father's name, but presumably this is no longer obligatory.

It is an important fact that State pensions put an end to the right of a woman to ask the Court to determine the child's paternity. This practice had led to some abuses, since alimony is based on the reputed income of the father, and it sometimes happened that a man in a responsible position, to avoid unpleasant publicity, allowed himself to be blackmailed for the upkeep of a child which was not his. Now the State is to pay a fixed sum for every "illegitimate" child, the identity and income of the father no longer matter. He can supplement the child's pension if he wishes, but that is his own affair. There is, of course, no stigma on children born out of wedlock, for public opinion recognises the right of every woman, including those unable or disinclined to marry, to bear children.

"Maternity," says the official dictum, "is the highest social function of woman and no occupation, even in wartime, is important enough to interfere with it." It is difficult to discover whether the drive for an increased birthrate will be accompanied by any tightening up of the regulations which control the sale of contraceptives—which are, in any case, scarce in war conditions—and the provision of birth control advice. "Our policy in these matters is unchanged," said the director of a women's clinic; "for years our propaganda has been against, rather than in favour of birth control. We have a long talk with every woman who comes here, and persuade her that under our social laws there is no economic difficulty to prevent her bearing children. She gets extra rations from the sixth month of pregnancy, and, if she nurses the child, until four months after birth. She will do no overtime or night work; she will have thirty-five days' holiday before birth and forty-two after, without prejudice to ordinary vacations. She can leave the child in a crèche in or near her place of work, and she is allowed to take time off to go and feed it. If she is physically unable to nurse the child, it will be fed from a "milk bank" contributed by mothers who have too much milk. This means that the mother need only take care of the child at nights, or, if she wishes, only at week-ends. With all these benefits, concluded the director, "why shouldn't every woman have a large family?"

One answer, in towns at least, is "what about housing conditions?" Russians will freely admit that there is a great shortage of accommodation in the larger towns. "That's because we have been concentrating on heavy industry for years," they say, generally adding, "and it's a very good thing, not only for us, but for all the United Nations that we did." Large housing schemes are being blue-printed in Moscow and other cities, but priority must obviously be given to industrial reconstruction in the immense devastated areas. The city housing problem, which will still remain acute for some years, not only in the devastated towns, but also in Moscow, will to some extent limit the immediate effects of the maternity laws. But in the villages they will act as an additional incentive to large families.

In contrast to the patriotically prolific citizens, those with no children, or only one or two, are taxed by the State—particularly city dwellers. A childless office worker will pay as much as six per cent. of his income in this way, whereas a childless collective farmer pays only a hundred and fifty roubles annually. For people like this, numbers of whom have been giving fifty thousand rouble tanks and hundred thousand rouble planes to the Red Army, this sum of a hundred and fifty roubles is negligible. It is a legitimate inference from this that the State is seeking to increase the birthrate among city dwellers, who always had fewer children than the peasants. These taxes, like premiums for mothers, are universally approved. Where the controversy is really fierce is around the long-awaited changes in the divorce laws. Until 1936, divorce was a matter costing only a couple of roubles. It was enough for one partner to apply for it without specifying reasons and even without consulting the other. People could and did marry someone else immediately after receiving a divorce certificate. The only trouble was that, owing to the scarcity of housing accommodation, the new couple might have to live apart from each other, continuing to share a room with their former spouses. The law of 1936, besides making the procedure slightly more complicated, increased the cost of the first divorce to fifty roubles, subsequent divorces being progressively more expensive. Public opinion about divorce began to change; anyone who changed their partner more than once was looked upon as frivolous, irresponsible and unlikely to be entrusted with important posts. Divorce figures among Party members dropped sharply.

Until July 8th it was still theoretically possible for a woman to divorce a husband at the front, but besides having to face the strictures and delaying policy of a shocked registrar, she would be universally condemned by public opinion, which lately has been stimulated by newspaper articles denouncing unfaithfulness by soldiers' wives. Now it is impossible to divorce a husband at the front or working in a distant part of the country, because both parties must appear in Court—in fact, two Courts, since the duty of the lower "People's" Court is merely to try to reconcile the couple. If it is unsuccessful, it proceeds to ascertain with the help of witnesses and also lawyers—who for the first time will appear in divorce actions—whether there are reasonable grounds for divorce. If it is satisfied that grounds exist, it passes on the case to the District Court for decision. If the petitioner does not succeed in obtaining a divorce from the District Court, he works his way up through Regional, Provincial, and City Courts to the Supreme Court of the Republic, a process which may take years and will certainly cost a lot of money. The estimated cost of a simple action—five hundred to two thousand roubles—naturally does not include lawyers' fees. Furthermore, unless the Court decides otherwise, all actions are open to the public; so that unpleasant publicity is now added to the troubles of divorce.

The law does not specify what are considered to be reasonable grounds for divorce, and there is considerable public curiosity on this point. Presumably there have been no divorce actions since July 8th; for, according to the new law, a petitioner must advertise his or her inten in the local newspaper, and no such no have so far appeared. Many people conc that jurists are now working out the questio "reasonable grounds," and that a new edict be issued in the near future. On the other h though the divorce courts may not be work the registrars are having a busy time registe "illegal" marriages of people who have l together, generally very faithfully and respect without bothering to legalise their union. woman who has grown-up children went July 9th with her war-invalid husband to " married," a step which she found rather amus but which had to be taken so that the survi partner could inherit the other's property.

It is significant that the most enthusia support for the new laws comes from yo people, especially young girls. After all hardship and turmoil of this war, after all millions of personal tragedies and broken hom "home and family" are very much the sub of day-dreams for the factory girl and the sol at the front. These marriage laws are not sim dictated by the State as a matter of policy expediency. They also reflect to a large ex that public feeling which Stalin and the Co munist Party have not only guided but watch carefully and, when possible, followed clos These laws provide a glimpse into that new ph of Soviet life which is already beginning to eve out of this war. Work, rather than relaxation, be the keynote of this society. Perhaps one of dangers the law-makers have been anxious avoid is the easy-going "early twenties" atm sphere, which came as a reaction to the last in nearly all the European countries, includi Russia. If this came now it would tend to interf with the great work of reconstruction and al "lower" the general tone of Russian socie Russia, after this war, will be much mo "victory-conscious" than England, France a America were after the last war.

IF

(After Kipling)

IF you can hold your tongue when all arou you
Will talk about the fly-bombs in their street,
If you've been blasted too, but don't feel bou to
Speak of the bomb that blew you off your sea
If you could talk about the one that raced yo
And circled, and turned back before it misse
And how you dashed to shelter as it chased you—
And still have resolution to desist:

If you can be a sympathetic hearer
When others tell you how their glass was blow
And boast that all their bombs have fall nearer—
Yet never breathe a word about your own;
If you've seen incidents you do not mention
Far worse than anything they've seen ne door;
If you can give buzz-bomb bores your attention
And not yourself become a buzz-bomb bore:

If you pursue your daily occupation,
Just as you did before the robots came,
If you can keep them out of conversation
And chat of other matters just the same;
If you've met bombs you never think of sharing
Though you were right beside them wh they dropped,
If you keep mum when others are comparin
What *they* felt like the time the engine stopped

If you can walk where doodle-trails are blazing
If you can pass where doodle-gazers gaze,
And you yourself refrain from doodle-gazing
Though everybody else has caught the craze
If you can keep aloof from mass suggestion,
If you stand fast while other people flap—
I'll say, my son, without the slightest question
You must be an extraordinary chap.

SAGITTARIUS

E FUTURE OF BRITISH FILMS

. J. ARTHUR RANK is an extremely able man. metimes, we think, he is equally lucky. For y months the internal war in the British film ld has been moving towards a climax. Last k, when the Cinematograph Films Council lished its report on the growth of monopoly the cinema industry—which was really an unt of Mr. Rank's recent business activities looked as though the show-down between and his critics had come at last. Now we not so sure. For at the moment the report eared the Films Council was being reshuffled. Rank has become a member of the new ncil. Michael Balcon, of Ealing Studios, the big independent producer outside the Rank bine, and one of its most bitter opponents, been excluded. If the Films Council is going do anything about the recommendations it de in the report, it will place at least one of members in a very difficult position; for Mr. k will have to get down to discussing con- e measures designed to limit his own influ- e and plans.

Mr. Rank and his publicists have denied that has any monopolistic ambitions. His sole pose, we have been told, is to promote the fare of British films and, by spending a lot money on their production, to secure them ir rightful place in the American market. All same, Mr. Rank has been steadily acquiring ery substantial number of cinemas and a large portion of the available facilities for producing s. Some time ago, Mr. Hugh Dalton, who, President of the Board of Trade, is responsible the conduct of the cinema industry, nounced that he had reached a "gentleman's eement" with Mr. Rank, by which the latter mised not to buy any more cinemas without consent of the Board of Trade. But as the rges of monopolistic tendencies continued, Cinematograph Films Council—a body set to advise the Board of Trade on the admin- ration of the Films Act of 1928—was asked to estigate them. Its sub-committee, consisting Sir Walter Citrine, Mr. Palache, and Professor nt, appointed to carry out the investigation, uld hardly avoid reaching the conclusion that recent years there has been a definite tend- cy to monopoly in the film industry."

The main outline of Mr. Rank's cinema ances is well known. Through Manorfields vestments, Ltd., he controls the General nema Finance Corporation, which in turn con- ls General Film Distributors, a large renting mpany which finances and distributes many of e films produced by Mr. Rank's companies. hrough the General Cinema Finance Corpora- on, Mr. Rank holds the majority of the voting ares in the Metropolitan and Bradford Trust, hich controls Gaumont-British and its eighty- ne subsidiary companies. By similar holding mpanies Mr. Rank is the main influence in e Odeon circuit. He thus possesses absolute ntrol of two out of the three main cinema circ- ts, the third belonging to Associated British ctures in which a half share is held by Warner rothers of America. Between them, these circ- its own approximately one thousand of the 750 cinemas in this country. Whilst this may rdly look like a monopoly at first glance, it repre- nts an almost complete stranglehold. Most of ese theatres are "first-run" houses, which take nsiderably more than one-third of the £110 illion which every year flows into the box- ffices all over this country. In London the circ- its own two-thirds of between three hundred nd three-fifty "first-run" cinemas. "The hold hich the circuits have over the remunerative ondon release area," says the Film Council eport, "gives them a very strong bargaining posi- on tantamount to monopoly power, so far as xhibition rights are concerned in the rest f Great Britain." When a circuit books film, it books it for the whole country. As more than twenty-five per cent. of the gross takings come from the London area, the owner of the film, rather than lose this important source of revenue, will allow the circuit to book his picture in their provincial cinemas, even though he could get better financial returns from other houses in the same district. This gives the circuits a position so strong that no film, except the very cheapest, can hope to show a profit unless it is taken by Odeon, Gaumont-British, or Associated British. If an independent producer—say, Mr. Balcon—found his pictures boycotted by the circuits, he might just as well close down. The revenue he would get from the independent cinemas, many of them second- and third-run houses, many poorly equipped and in poor situations, is totally insufficient to enable any producer to maintain a programme of good-quality film production.

Besides occupying this dominating position in the exhibiting side of the industry, Mr. Rank's control of two big circuits gives him a powerful hold over the entire range of film production. Again through a series of holding companies, he controls the studios at Denham, Pinewood and Islington, as well as the Gaumont-British production facilities. In the studios now operating, he controls fifty-five per cent. of the floor-space and thirty-two per cent. of the floor-space temporarily requisitioned by the Government for war purposes. Much of the remaining studio space is owned by Associated British. Only two large independent studios remain—at Ealing and at Boreham Wood. Thus the greater part of current British production is financed and distributed by Mr. Rank's companies. But his interests go even beyond this. He owns or controls at least two processing laboratories, two news reels and a number of equipment companies, which are able to furnish his cinemas from the ash-trays to the projectors. Through Gaumont-British Instructional he is moving into the educational field, and, as befits his position in the Methodist Church, he has developed a private sideline in the making of religious films.

Mr. Rank has built up this great business in a very few years, and it would be foolish to deny that he has brought some degree of order and stability into an industry that was notorious for perpetually recurring crises and instability of employment. But the effect of this growing monopoly is but dubiously beneficial. Take, for example, the claim that Mr. Rank is going to secure a better position for British films in the American market. In any case it would take some years before this country could compete in quantity—qualitatively we are already equal—with Hollywood's output, and some people have long argued that the stronger Mr. Rank became the more dependent he would be on American films to provide programmes for his many cinemas. This is what has already begun to happen. Quite recently Mr. Rank made a deal with Twentieth-Century Fox, a major Hollywood production company, which gave it an equal part of the non-voting shares in Metropolitan and Bradford, which controls Gaumont-British. On the G.B. board there are in future to be two nominees of the American company, Gaumont-British articles of association being changed to allow voting by non-British shareholders of the ordinary stock. Though Mr. Rank has given an undertaking that the control of the company is to remain in British hands, the fact remains that he has had to make a large concession to Hollywood in order to secure facilities to distribute his own productions in the U.S.A.

The Films Council report sets out a concrete policy for dealing with the problem. It suggests that restrictive legislation is essential; there have been too many gentlemen's agreements for the Council not to desire binding decisions. Further purchase of cinemas or studios by the circuits should be forbidden except by consent of the Board of Trade; the combines should be placed under some trustee agreement to prevent control passing into foreign hands or "undesirable groups of persons." In order to assist independent film producers, the Board of Trade is asked to make a fair allocation of studio space and to make Government-owned studios available to independent producers at a fair rental. Significantly, in view of Mr. Rank's policy of high-cost pictures, the report urges that support should be given to the production of a large number of medium-cost feature pictures rather than to the speculative ventures which he seems to have in mind. This, like the proposal that the Government should create a film finance corporation and a renting organisation for both the home and overseas markets, seems to us more controversial than the more limited technical recommendations. For it poses the whole question of the future course of British films. Obviously, none of Mr. Rank's critics are anxious to see his monopoly replaced by a State monopoly. Yet perfect competition, everywhere a myth in modern conditions, is utopian in an industry like the cinema, which not merely involves a big element of risk but which also requires considerable financial backing. It is difficult to judge whether the Council's suggestion of possible methods of State intervention would prove workable. Much, of course, would depend on its character, which in turn depends on the politics of the Government of the day. But during the war, when the documentary producers have been working almost entirely for the Ministry of Information, we have seen that State control does not necessarily involve regimented and lifeless productions which leave no scope for the independent or unorthodox producer. This question, which is tied up with other issues, like that of subjects, of the social function of the cinema to-day, of its political and educational function, on which we have not touched, is unlikely to be solved overnight. But we expect Mr. Dalton to ensure that the voice of the Films Council Report is not blanketed. Amongst its new members are Mrs. Mary Hamilton and Mr. Creech-Jones, M.P. They, and all those who look for a better future for British films, will be waiting to see what Mr. Dalton proposes to do.

IN A LONDON PARK

SOME weeks ago, before the clouds began raining doodle-bugs, a small public announcement might have escaped the notice of Londoners. It seemed designed, the L.C.C.'s "Holidays at Home" programme, to escape notice. We had been ordered by the Government to stay put; here was an invitation card. Things were going to happen in the parks, in the shape of a military band or two, an open-air theatre, dancing at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Not quite the programme, I should have thought, to arrest the unnecessary traveller, but that's our way. The few who paused to read the notice outside their Town Hall may have reflected, "Well, if the worst comes to the worst, there are always the parks."

There are the ducks and the flowerbeds and the baseball players and the leggy girls and the sunlight (when you're lucky) and the trees and the tuppenny chairs and the bits of newspaper and the queue for boating: pleasures no city ruminant can resist. One way of mitigating the present is to take a copy, say, of *The Peloponnesian War* (Thucydides reduces wars to the scale of a Jane Austen novel) into Hyde Park, and read and doze and wake to find yourself in the midst of a flock of sheep. Not every London park has a flock of sheep, a Rotten Row, an orators' corner, but one merit of the L.C.C. poster—no, it could hardly be called a poster—was to remind us of the other parks we scarcely know unless we live next to them. Battersea with its river walk especially charming at sunset; Greenwich and Ken Wood, masterpieces out of the age of landscape gardening. It is among the little and lesser-known parks, though, that one makes discoveries.

A rainy Saturday afternoon found me with a friend exploring Grovelands in North London. The old house, a heavily pillared affair with modern outbuildings, is used as a hospital; tattered barbed wire encloses a wood which may once have held a military secret. But as parks go, this one is comparatively peaceful.

There is a lake, sheltered by trees and deeper than you'd think; and a carp, it is said, lives in the depths, old, unseen, and grown fat on suicides, or why should so many fishermen watch with their rods and tins all day?

The clouds were holding up, so my friend and I, after circling the lake, looked for somewhere to sit and watch too. The first deck-chair had become a bird bath; but farther on there were other chairs stacked and dry. A latent melancholy of the scene (oh, this summer!) took possession. Black water, blacker woods! Rain had imparted a gloss to dankness and the few people walking trod delicately and kept to the paths. Gaze awhile and the figures magnify; a corridor opens to childhood, to sunlight and kites flying and hoops bowling, and beyond them to the dark, silent woods and water. How one longed for the distance! But enchantment—outside the reach of a Nanny's eye—could attain only so far before terrors closed in. Then a fierce-looking boy would stoop to pick up a stone, the keeper would come out from the trees with his big stick. Some trepidation of early memories still attaches a legend to such scenes.

We sat by the lake and smoked and talked, without noticing the hammering that was going on at our backs. When we turned it was to find that a Punch-and-Judy stage had sprung up not a dozen yards away, and that the performance was about to begin. An audience, largely of children, had collected out of nowhere. The curtains parted and there was Punch, whom I hadn't seen for fifteen years, nodding his head and singing away to himself in a wicked treble. Tra-la-la-la! At the first opportunity that staff of his would come down crack on somebody's skull. We hadn't long to wait. An argument with Judy—surprisingly deep-voiced—soon led to blows; then there was the business of Toby and the string of sausages, and he copped it too. After that a procession of visitors—policeman, doctor, black boxer and white boxer, baby, crocodile, bogy, hangman—came upstairs to be clubbed and laid out in a row. "This is the way," said Punch gleefully, counting his dead. At one moment he was bouncing the baby on its head, at another cramming a ghost back into its coffin, and in the end he pulled the noose tight round the hangman's neck. Every blow, every new stroke of violence brought delighted screams from the children sitting round; they were quick enough, too, to catch out Punch in a lie. He survives ignominy, to croon and kill another day; rightly, for while violence may be to the children's taste, tragedy is not. So Punch, in the English version, lives on. Whether the drama is, as tradition tells, a parody of the Crucifixion, I don't know, but, in the form that emerges to-day, it suggests something between *Everyman* and *Sweeney Todd*. It is a sort of Immorality Play for the young. Having applauded the triumph of evil, these boys and girls went home, I've no doubt, looking as good as gold, to mind the baby and help with the washing up.

The resurrection of Punch between showers in a North London park had taken me by surprise; and even more surprising was the vivacity of the performance. Punch beaming, Punch bouncing the baby and prising open the crocodile's jaw to play a piano on its lower teeth, Punch enraged, Punch on the scaffold: I don't remember such feats of virtuosity from childhood. And for a moment, as the wind lifted the trappings, one saw the serious, spectacled face of the manipulator sitting below scenes. He didn't come round afterwards to collect, but packed his show and went as efficiently as he had come. I learnt afterwards that we owed the performance to the Southgate Borough Council, and that but for the bombing, Mr. Stanley Quigley and his puppets would have been seen in the parks of London proper. Accidentally, in fact, I had come across an example of the good the L.C.C. intends by stealth. Let us hope the dread "Amenities" will contain other surprises as lively.

Things happen in the parks in any case. I have seen a man on a park bench in a snowstorm, sitting and reading his newspaper; people have rushed past me to dive into the Serpentine, for a variety of reasons; and year after year a cultured old gentleman used to discourse, with a passion and wit not shared by his audience, upon shorthand. He has died since, I believe, taking the perfect system with him.

G. W. Stonier

LINES ON THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE PARISH MACHINERY POOLS

"Wallowing in wealth" (so Drayton, *Polyolbion*)
The Vale of Aylesbury hugs the Chiltern massif,
A sprawling amorous giantess, the farthest fingers
In limestone pools dipping, remote headwaters
Of Ouse and Ousel, sweet Thame, sluggish Ray.

The roll-call is as old as history:
Winchendon, Ashendon, Quainton and Quarrendon,
The Astons, the Draytons, the Claydons, the Marstons,
And those two Underwoods, Wotton and Grendon.

Fields in which I have loitered, villages
Where once I canvassed Socialism, farms
I recorded diligently, on private charts
Tracing the public impact of blockade,
In you I claim peculiar interest.

The Saxons made my Vale, hacking into
The wall of oaks and ashes, too daunting for Rome,
Until the resolute open fields lay bare
Beneath the moon, and out of yellow clay
Under the kindly rule of their village courts
Barley, spring beans and winter wheat displayed
Their alternating shades of blue and green.

And so those patient people bore up the centuries,
Learning by jurisdiction over balk,
Gore-acre, lot-meadow, mound and pound
An English twist to δημοκρατια.

Fragments of the old society persist.
Yes, once in Oakley, once in Marsh I caught
Echoes of the Vale before the hard-faced fox-hunters,
Arrogant in the armour of limited liability,
Rode down the yeomanry, and enclosure
Loosed a corrupting virus in the selfish farms.

But in the main dead I used to think it, dead
Beyond the wishful magic of revival.
Reading the Hammonds' *Village Labourer*
Bred bitter thoughts. So something had been killed
Richer than Rothschild, or than Grenville great,
Here in my Buckinghamshire parishes.

The bitter thoughts have passed. This year new hope
Flooded my spirit when I saw the pools,
Our wartime farmers' co-operatives,
Gathering new strength, like Antæus, from the earth
They plough and disc, manure and drill so well.

This lovely evening, my shouting children
(All Brill was playing rounders in the garden),
The zooming efficient bombers in the sky,
Conspired with meditations on the pools
To a daydream of an English countryside,
Where *liberté, égalité* are facts,
And from apocalyptic chariot descending
Fraternité bestrides the Aylesbury Market.

F. W. Bateson

THE MOVIES

"Report from the Aleutians," at Warner's
"Whistling in Brooklyn," at the Empire

Those who were lucky enough to see *Memphis Belle* the other day will find another stirring example of the American documentary at Warner's this week. Same method: 9 mm. technicolor film, edited and given a sound track in Hollywood. The technicolor produces fresh effects, sometimes beautiful, sometimes flat, sometimes glaringly vulgar. It is the commentary, chiefly, pitched neither too high nor too low, that lifts these films out of the rut of war reporting. Compare our own dreary little fragments from Burma with *Report from the Aleutians* in which the material starts level. Half the battle here is against natural conditions: wind, rain and mist, volcanic islands which produce literally nothing. The invader has to bring everything with him; in a few days a lake must be drained, the mud ploughed and rolled, a steel flooring laid, to make an aerodr from which to attack the Japs at the end of this ch of islands. The only hint of life is a few ra overhead: Every day the Japs are bombed, and follow one mission in detail, down to the bomb run on three levels, and the journey home. T film is as moving in its way (we shall remem the airmen's funeral and the thin whistle of fal bombs) as *Memphis Belle*.

Almost certainly, at some time or other, you have had Red Skelton thrust upon you when wai for the film you had gone to see. It can be unnerv experience, especially if it happens twice, as it did me during visits to *The Magnificent Ambersons*. is of the Bob Hope kind though not class; and gi hunts and crime chases are his speciality. Th is a good deal of prancing, yelling, and mak faces. Well, *Whistling in Brooklyn*, a pretty tau of crooks and cops, reveals him as not bad at When he hangs over a liftshaft, three others dan with, or rather from, him; and his bearded baseb player, in an arena ringed by killers, is farce of kind that has been rare since Harold Lloyd. Gi the right predicaments, Mr. Skelton can cut a gid caper.

William Whitebait

Correspondence

TAMED TIGER?

Sir,—It would be churlish to complain of M Aylmer Vallance's very kind and generous revie of my book "The New Economy." But in the co cluding paragraph, when he says that in boom perio I would stop all public works in hand, irrespective their utility and without regard to human needs, does me something of an injustice.

What I wrote was: "In normal times the St can and should *initiate* a programme of nation *development* on any scale demanded by the existi level of unemployment. . . . In boom periods wo would be slowed down in accordance with a prior list; whereas in slack periods it could be broug forward in accordance with long-term plans alread prepared and ready to be executed, and with th advantage of exceptionally low interest charges."

There is no implication in this that public works hand should be stopped. Nor do I contemplate fo a moment that essential works or services should, any circumstances, be held up. What I had in mi was simply the *pace* of national development; an this will clearly have to be conditioned by a scale social priorities, determined by the State. Perha I may be allowed to add that the main purpose of th control over imports which I advocate is to ensur that the demand for the basic necessities of life satisfied before the demand for luxuries is met.

House of Commons. Robert Boothby

PRISONERS OF JAPAN

Sir,—May we draw your attention to some little known facts about the terrible situation of som three hundred thousand European internees an prisoners in Japanese prison camps? The wors camps are situated in three districts: Hong Kong the Malayan jungle and Thailand. Therefor generalisations about camp conditions based on thos in Peiping, most other parts of China, Shanghai an Japan itself cannot be applicable to them. It i possible to go further than this and say that a gre many hardships and privations that exist, say, in Hon Kong, are due to the "reassuring" statements brough out by those who had priority treatment (owing t their business, teaching or other connections wit neutrals, Chinese or Japanese) from which ignorant harassed or even, alas, indifferent officials here hav made ridiculous "favourable" generalisations.

Take, for example, the question of food. Durin more than two and a half years of imprisonment a Stanley (Hong Kong) there has been only one offici delivery of parcels, which took place about Christma 1942. The basic ration of cargo rice, polished ric and occasional soya fat was not enough to maintai life over a long period, according to Mr. Eden. La September, the last Colonial Secretary and his com mittee of doctors sent out an S.O.S. saying that mos

of the Stanley internees would be dead by Christmas 1943 unless more food arrived by then. None of their relatives has had any evidence of their survival after that date.

The British Government have sent each month a sum of money through the International Red Cross to be distributed for the benefit of internees in Hong Kong, but although this started arriving in December 1942, our relatives and others had not seen any of it by July 1943. This money would have been a great help at the meagre canteen for those—and they were many—who had no neutral connections or compradores to help them. Disease, of course, was widespread, especially that resulting from malnutrition, like beri-beri, pellagra, dysentery, sprue, rickets and blindness.

Last summer one of us had an S.O.S. through the I.R.C. for money to buy food for her grandson who was suffering from rickets. About this time, Swedish authorities, acting for Belgian internees in Japanese hands, had advised and secured an increased cash allowance for them. Yet when we pleaded with the Treasury to do the same for British babies, we were told that this was impossible and that the authorities concerned had received no unfavourable reports about this particular camp. We should like to know why *monthly* reports are not sent by the I.R.C.; why relations receive so few letters—one of us had four letters, two Red Cross messages and two cards in two and a half years; and whose business it is to see that all those who have to make decisions affecting the lives of the prisoners have the tragic facts in front of them at the time?

There seems to be a lamentable state of wishful thinking about the real conditions on the part of our Government. The complacent statements that are made from time to time are used by the Japanese as propaganda; possibly also as a reason for denying neutral inspectors access to the Southern camps; and for minimising the urgency of parcel deliveries. There are many offenders in this respect amongst returning missionaries. News can be obtained, if urgency requires it, *via* Moscow and Tokyo in less than a day, but while we have met the official objection that cables are costly and the lines overloaded, there never seems to have been any eagerness on the part of the Government or charitable organisations to get monthly reports and distribute them to relatives.

The question of repatriation is also the subject of evasion and excuses. Most of the answers that we have heard have been inconsistent and inadequate. It is a matter of interest that many of the internees who have no reason to like or trust the Japanese seem to believe that the difficulties and delays are not entirely at their end. There is an important divergence between the American policy and our own. They have had two repatriations to our one and are busy working for a third. There is a large number of Japanese in Allied hands who are available for exchange. We do not believe that the difficulty lies here. Rather it is due to shipping shortage; lack of co-ordination; the absence of any effective interest to secure constant and up-to-date information, and the lack of experts with a real knowledge of Japan and the conditions in the camps in positions of responsibility.

Something *must* be done. We can see only two alternatives before those of our countrymen who have sat pretty in London and achieved so little. If they are "satisfied that everything possible is being done" they must go, for that very reason. But if they are honestly trying to secure improvements and achieve so little, they must give way to those—and there are a good many—unemployed experts in Japanese affairs.

Cambridge. R. HUNT
J. W. BURFORD
W. B. BENNETT

THE LABOUR PARTY

SIR,—Mr. Gee's naivety is incredible. Does he really believe that the Labour Party is one big happy family, and that all individuals and groups see eye to eye on all issues? He really must remember that, generally speaking, the Party is not, like some local parties, composed of hand-picked individuals about whose capacity to toe the line there is no doubt.

He appears to have missed the whole point of my letter. Of course the Labour Party has made several pronouncements on various aspects of policy, and many of these have been approved by Conference. What it lacks, and what Mrs. Joan Thompson so rightly stresses, is the need for the formulation of a policy which will embrace all aspects of our national and international life. In many ways the Party is following the example of the Government. White Papers pour from the Stationery Office, but so far they are isolated pieces in a gigantic and confusing jigsaw. What we require is the general pattern so that we can fit them more easily into place.

The dangers of this method to the Labour Party are great. It may well be that those industries which are either nationalised or controlled will be only those that cannot stand on their own legs. And if industries outside those spheres are left uncontrolled, then they may themselves exploit the nationalised industries with disastrous consequences. The principle of public ownership and control will itself be discredited. If we are now in the age of total war, when all private interests must be subordinated to the public good, then we shall equally be in need of the principle of total peace in the post-war years.

R. MITCHELL

54 Crowtrees Lane, Rastrick,
Brighouse, Yorkshire.

THREE GERMANYS

SIR,—In his interesting note (*N.S. & N.*, July 29th) on Sumner Welles' *Time for Decision*, Critic writes: "If there is a (European) customs union" the three (hypothetical) Germanys will unite unless the Allies are prepared to police Germany indefinitely.

But later on he writes that "if the Great Powers agree in Europe, a defeated and disarmed Germany is helpless, anyway."

To some of us who are interested in the case for and against dismembering Germany it would seem that if Germany is helpless, the three Germanys would not be able to unite without the Powers' permission. Germany was unable to absorb Austria for 20 years, and until she had rearmed. Would Critic kindly explain this apparent inconsistency?

Letchworth Hall, T. H. MINSHALL
Herts.

[Critic replies: "This is an imaginary inconsistency. By helpless I meant internationally helpless to be a menace to her neighbours, and I thought this clear in the context. But unless we were to make the surely impossible attempt permanently to police artificially invented frontiers within Germany, these three Germanys would soon be economically and socially reunited in the normal course of trade and intercourse. Surely this is not difficult to follow? If Britain, for instance, had been defeated and were deprived of her Empire and Navy and her enemies remained united to prevent her again becoming a Great Power, she would be "helpless," but nothing except a permanent foreign garrison (God help it!) could maintain a frontier between the north and south of England."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

MALARIA

SIR,—There is one serious omission in the recently published comments on West Africa which merits closer attention; there is no mention of malaria, of which the most severe, or malignant tertian, form insidiously dominates West African life.

I must emphasise its significance. All West Africa is very highly malarious all the year round and all native children are first infected by the age of one year; examination of the blood of children age 1 to 15 years, at any time, always shows that at least 55 per cent., usually 75 per cent., and often more, are infected. It kills children and degrades adults.

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ANGUS ROSE

Who Dies Fighting

This book attempts to show how the defences of Singapore were built up and how they were knocked down. The author, who is a regular soldier, went out to Malaya at the beginning of the war as a Regimental Officer. His experiences as a front-line fighting soldier, in the campaign that followed, add a colour to the narrative that could never be attained by a war correspondent or a professional historian. The story is written impartially and the comments are based entirely on first-hand evidence.

September [10s 6d net]

JONATHAN CAPE

Surviving adults have a dearly won, precarious, immunity but are often ill with fever and may be off work for two or three days every few weeks, and even when they can work they are unusually dull and clumsy, for malignant tertian malaria saps the energy and initiative of the sufferer and blunts his intelligence. Malarial saturation is a biological handicap responsible for much West African backwardness. Can anyone doubt that emancipation from this devitalising influence is a primary necessity?

Commonly 60-90 per cent. suffer from hookworm and roundworm infections, and malnutrition is widespread, so that most of the population suffer constantly from the pernicious effects of at least two chronic debilitating diseases. Can a sick people do the "hard and regular work" on which Dr. Huxley insists and attain industrial skill and a high standard of living?

Malnutrition and worm infections tend to disappear as the economic standard rises. Malaria control, however, requires specific measures, but its importance and necessity are not yet recognised by responsible persons. I do not know of any work done on this problem (Services excepted) in the whole of British West Africa, nothing beyond the pigeon-holing of mosquito and parasite survey reports. Yet freedom from malaria is a major freedom for West Africans.

Soldiers, labourers and artisans, R.A.F. and U.S. Army employees now earn attractive wages. Peace will release them—to what? They cannot all return to subsistence farming, no clerk or artisan would—occupational prestige means much, a salaried job means more. Malaria control is not a Medical Department domestic matter; it is mainly engineering, land reclamation and water control. The unemployed West African could work on this constructive task. Action need not wait on political changes, for while Education struggles for a foothold and competent Native Administrations slowly evolve, well-directed anti-malarial schemes could effect rapid improvement.

CYRIL PHILLIPS

23 Leigham Hall,
Streatham High Road,
London, S.W.15.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

SIR,—A professional man of my acquaintance living in a London suburb officially listed as dangerous had, after much trouble, succeeded in making arrangements for the removal to the country of his wife and three-year old child. On arrival at the rooms which he had rented for them in the house of an English woman of the middle classes, they were pleasantly and kindly received by the landlady until, in the course of casual conversation, it transpired that the evacuated family was of Jewish origin and that the child's parents were refugees from Germany. Having become aware of this, the landlady, with tears in her eyes, told the mother that it would be impossible for her to allow them to stay in her house. In spite of the fact that her decision meant forcing a child back to the horrors of flying bomb attacks, she insisted that they must leave at once. The child's mother is a sensitive and highly cultivated woman and the distressing effect of this incident on her may be readily imagined.

The sinister aspect of this affair is that the landlady herself obviously hated acting in this way, and gave the impression that she was yielding to the force of public opinion in her district. It is, I feel, important that such an incident should not be allowed to pass without a publicly uttered protest.

J. POOL

MAINTENANCE ORDERS

SIR,—During the war most sections of the community have received some increase in their income, but as far as I am aware, nothing whatsoever has been done to increase the payments which magistrates are empowered by Statute to award (by Maintenance or Separation Orders) to wives or (by Affiliation Orders) to the mothers of illegitimate children. The maximum amount that can be awarded to a wife is £2 per week and 10s. per week for each child, in each case payable by the husband. 10s. per week is also the maximum that the magistrates can order the begetter of an illegitimate child to pay to its mother. These maxima have been in force for many years despite the increased cost of living. It is surely time that Members of Parliament raised this question on behalf of not very vocal sections of the community.

In the case of bastardy it seems to me that Parliament should also face the wider social question involved. The mother should obviously be paid enough to support the child, but would there not be a general consensus of opinion in the country favourable to an attempt to raise the status of the mother and child? Can we not here learn something from the humane attitude of our Russian allies to this problem? The Revolution abolished the legal status of illegitimacy. The latest step has been to provide for full State assistance to the mother. At the same time divorce is discouraged together with irresponsible relations between the sexes. It would indeed require the pen of a Swift to point the hypocrisy of a country which calls out for more children and yet still raises the finger of scorn and cries "bastard" to some of the children that it has in being. May I conclude with the usual disclaimer? I am neither a bastard myself nor have I begotten any (though like other men, subject to the future chances and changes of this mortal life and the jurisdiction of H.M.'s Justices of the Peace).

"A SOLICITOR IN H.M. FORCES"

MME. PISSARRO

SIR,—I must apologise for burdening your Correspondence columns again, but Mr. Mortimer's sympathetic review of the Pissarro letters calls for a word of protest. The late Mme. Pissarro, whom I met on several occasions, was far more than "a nagging wife." She was an indefatigable worker and a fine cook, and she carried the burden of the home at Eragny through the lean years when Camille Pissarro had still to win fame. A shrewd countrywoman "she had a tongue with a tang," but she also had a kind heart and a pleasant smile and never wasted an hour of daylight.

C.P. was tireless. I remember sitting in his studio in Paris in the year of the Great Exhibition that ushered in this disastrous century, and asking why he was working on three canvases devoted to the same subject—the Rue de Rivoli as seen from his window, if memory serves me truly. "It is all a question of light," he explained. "I choose my canvas in response to the weather; a painter should never be idle."

By the way, Lucien Pissarro lived just long enough to receive copies of the letters. One lies before me as I write with an inscription in a beautiful handwriting that few men of eighty could rival.

S. L. B.

THE PRESENT AND THE POST-WAR WORLD

SIR,—Just a word about the second paragraph of Critic's "Diary" in your issue of August 5th. I see little reason to doubt the unreality of a bomb, placed, at the instigation of highly expert Prussian generals, under the table at which Hitler was sitting, and succeeding in shooting off Adolf's trousers and bruising his arm without further injury to the man whose destruction was the aim of the plotters. It may be all right; but I have my doubts.

HARRY ROBERTS

Oakshott Hanger,
Hawkley, Liss, Hants.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

GENIUS, says Baudelaire, is but childhood neatly formulated. But what is childhood's poetic formula? The smell of the apple loft, the garden hut mouldy with leaves—we remember them, in brief moments, as full of meaning. Childhood returns to the adult seldom in more than fleeting sensations, difficult to evoke, and rarely captured and held in their true emotional climate. For consciously or not, memory and imagination combine to transfigure the years of youth as soon as they are left behind. Their season one remembers wrongly to have been one long, undisturbed spring. But the climate of adolescence is autumn, its flavour melancholy. As the youth strolls down the leaf-strewn path, his heart is filled with anguish, unrest, wild hopes and despair. As he awaits life he does not suspect that memory will before long transform what is only the ante-room into a paradise lost. To a few only—and they are indeed far between—it is given truly to comprehend the emotional validity of adolescence while they live it, to realise its meaning as they go through it, and therefore to preserve its image. They indeed cling to their youth in full consciousness of its being beyond recovery once lost. They taste its flavour knowingly like precious wine of which they possess but one glassful, and their genius is nourished by an intensity of feeling they are already certain they will never experience again. "Ivre de jeunesse"—this how Henri Alain-Fournier has been described by a friend, and if it isn't the formula itself, it is certainly the only emotional condition in which it is likely to be discovered. Alain-Fournier's short life as a poet was one perpetual search for the magic formula. The author of the greatest French novel on adolescence believed stubbornly and passionately in "l'enfance." He felt he must "arriver à la rendre sans aucune puérilité, avec sa profondeur qui touche les mystères," or fail as a poet.

His hero emerges on a day in late November. A tall boy of seventeen, his head clean shaven, his straw hat pushed back, the black blouse girded by a belt. Augustin Meaulnes wanders through the village school of which he is to be a boarder. His step is heard in the garret where lime blossom is spread out to dry. He seems to linger among the blackened squibs left over from the last quatorze-juillet, then walks out into the dusky courtyard. And to the fascination of the schoolmaster's son, the new boy whom the other pupils will soon call the Great Meaulnes lights up the autumn evening with July's forgotten fireworks. As they gush up in a magic glimmer there ends, at the school of Sainte-Agathe, the time of childhood joys. Another world opens, full of wonder, great secrets, and adventure, a world both real and unreal, the perfect mirror of adolescent dream.

Alain-Fournier's death, thirty years ago, started a legend which has kept his book alive. Published just before the last war, *Le Grand Meaulnes* survives an avalanche which buried the work of others, and came to fresh glory in the twenties when a new generation mourned its author. Henri de Régnier, Francis Jammes, Cocteau and others paid homage to him in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. But from the founder of this review, Jacques Rivière, had meanwhile come as much enlightenment about the poet as we are ever likely to receive. His intimate friend since the days of the Lycée, later the husband of his beloved sister to whom *Le Grand Meaulnes* is dedicated, Rivière was able to trace back the decisive influences and the turning-points in Alain-Fournier's life. (Their correspondence reveals incomparably the intellectual development of a whole generation.) Born in 1886 in the Departement Cher, he had found his first inspiration in the marshes and reeds, birds and fowl, pine forests and deserted chateaux of his native countryside, later, at the Lycée Lakanal, in the second-rate symbolist writers of the *fin-de-siècle*. His taste was improved, but not diverted, when he discovered Mallarmé, Verlaine, Rimbaud. The wild parks of Berry called only the more urgently after he had gone away, to Paris. And so, until the end, his imagination was to be nourished from two conflicting sources: the simple pleasures offered by his peasant background and an acquired metaphorical, transfigurating, literary conception of life. "Je suis froissé," Rivière exclaimed at one time, "par sa tendence à tout transfigurer." Yet while he searched "cette partie de moi où les choses sont obscures, impossibles à exprimer," while he pondered for days over the meaning of some symbolist phrase like "où le Griffon a-t-il enterré le Saphire," he felt that this alone would not serve the novel he meant to write. It would have to contain an outer reality as well as an inner, "un perpetuel va-et-vient insensible de rêve à la réalité: Rêve entendu comme l'immense et imprécise vie enfantine planant au-dessus de l'autre and sans cesse mise en rumeur par les échos de l'autre."

What can only be described, in modern times, as his neurotic attitude towards women, made in fact the final contribution to Alain-Fournier's genius. They were to him the embodiment of purity, innocence, and almost unreal beauty. He was dejected to the point of cruelty when the women he knew betrayed, with a misplaced word, or an unexpected gesture, the image he had created of them within himself. He never forgave them for destroying his vision. The only perfect adventure of his life was the encounter, in a Paris park, with an unknown beautiful girl who disappeared soon after and whom he only found again years later when she was married. A human defect, no doubt. Yet seen in another light his was simply the medieval conception of woman, derived from the cult for the Virgin Mary, and revived by the poets of the early nineteenth century. Here as elsewhere Alain-Fournier's affinity with the romantics asserts itself. Even the friendship with Rivière, and the veneration for his sister Isabelle whom this friend was to marry, recall Achim von Arnim, Bettina, Clemens Brentano, and their tenderly woven relationship. Like the writers of the romantic school, he is frequently despairing of life and attracted by death. Forever he seems in search of a "pays sans nom," his symbol—like the blue flower of the Germans—for happiness hidden beyond the hills, almost within your reach, never in your grasp. At twenty-three, he suffers from a nervous breakdown and, haunted by phantasmagoric visions, flees into the accredited mysticism of the Church. The account he gives of his conversion, incidentally, may well serve to guide back growing writers entangled in their own youthful preciousness, to the fundamentals of their craft. "J'ai trouvé," he informs Rivière, "mon Chemin de Damas un beau soir. Je me suis mis à écrire simplement, directement, comme une de mes lettres, par petits paragraphes serrés et voluptueux, une histoire simple qui pourrait être la mienne." When at last he began to write *Le Grand Meaulnes*, he had discovered his formula, the complete fusion of reality and imagination, of things seen and things dreamed. From now on, and indeed throughout the years that remained of his life, he was helped and influenced by Charles Péguy. This peasant genius to whom myths were real, and who saw the supernatural immanent in daily life, immensely encouraged Alain-Fournier in his belief "que les rêves se promènent."

Thus unfolds the story of Augustin Meaulnes, romantic, *buissonier*, yet written with utmost simplicity. Its background, the school, the wintry village, frozen country roads, a smithy where the boys assemble on some of their "grands soirs de l'adolescence" filled with the foreboding of extraordinary things to happen, is prepared with Flaubertian exactitude and deliberation. Where is the transition from idyll to fantasy? Impossible to tell. Meaulnes sets out in a pony trap one afternoon to meet the schoolmistress's parents, a worthy old couple, at the train. But as soon as he reaches the high road, the unforeseen, the incalculable begins to intrude. Imperceptibly, reality is left behind. Beyond that cross road lies adventure. He loses his way, the pony escapes, night falls on a landscape turned wilderness. The next day Augustin discovers a château filled with people in the clothes of the eighteen-thirties. True, it is a fête arranged for the son of the house and his bride. The ladies at the supper table are but village women in disguise, the pierrot is a hired comedian, the young men in their finery have crude peasant songs on their lips. But forget it for awhile and you walk in a dream! Here opens a door into a dimly lit room. It is full of children. Some turn the pages of albums balanced on their knees, others look silently at little pictures, others listen, crouched near the fire, to the distant murmurs of the fête. Enter another door, and here more children sit grouped around a young girl in a maroon-coloured cloak who softly plays airs and roundelays on a piano. And this is what happens in the dream: by one of those sudden projections of adult life into adolescence which all of us have experienced, Augustin has a glimpse of himself grown up and married to the beautiful stranger, the mother of his children. For one eternal moment, he is filled with "le bonheur le plus calme de monde."

The enchanted castle of the fairy tale is illuminated for one night, then vanishes. So, after he has encountered in the young châtelaine the girl he must henceforth love, Augustin departs and loses trace of the mysterious domain. With great smoothness and grace, the tale wanders back and forth, from the village grocery to a rain-drenched bench on a Paris boulevard, from a gipsy camp to the wild park of the château. The schoolmaster's son will come upon the lost treasure by chance, like Parsifal the simple fool. But in the romantic world, the treasure, once found, is still elusive. Confronted with the object of his nostalgia, Augustin sees reality and shudders. The first reunion of lover and beloved ends in despair.

In the most tragic figure of the book, Frantz the young châtelain, Alain-Fournier must have created the embodiment of his own intuitive longing. Frantz, sombre, erect, his fine head bandaged to hide the wounds received in a mysterious fight, is the restless spirit, the flickering flame which engulfs the happiness of all who love him. When Augustin at last marries the girl, Frantz draws him away, in a wild urge for adventures "sur les routes d'Allemagne." The Great Meaulnes will return only to find his home shattered, his wife dead. Wrapping his child in his cloak, he will plunge again into the night.

The dark call from the roads of Germany seems the final link between Alain-Fournier and the literary school of that country. His romanticism is not that of Nodier, Musset, Gautier, though it has often been likened to theirs, but the wild, boundless, diffuse overflow of fancy which has for generations frightened an essentially rational France. There is no evidence that he was ever directly inspired by any of the German writers of the early nineteenth century. Perhaps he had never even read a line of Schlegel, Tieck, or Fouqué. In that case he must have drawn from that well of imagination, that undercurrent across peoples and time, which is the common fund of all children and poets. Freud said once that "dreams are the myths of mankind." Alain-Fournier's dreams may have been wafted to him from the Germany of fifty years before his time. It is his great fortune that he found in the tradition of balance and composure, inherent in his race, the means to master his subject in a manner denied to the earlier romantic writers.

His end, so typical for the fratricidal tragedies of Europe, came during the first months of the world war. He was sent out, in the wood of Saint-Rémy, to reconnoitre the enemy. "Faut chercher les boches," his colonel is said to have repeated senselessly as he despatched the small party into their certain doom. Or was it only the distortion of an unconscious command to find death, the ultimate salvation of all romantics, "sur les routes d'Allemagne"?

HILDE SPIEL

FRANCE OR SPAIN

Spanish Now. By E. ALLISON PEERS. *Methuen.* 6s.

For many years Mr. Allison Peers has been our most productive and diligent, if not our most inspired Hispanophile; and now, in this book, he has warmed up and has come out to fight. He wants to see, not a slight increase, but an enormous increase in the teaching of Spanish at secondary schools. He wants to end the present predominance of French. English and Spanish, he says, divide the new world between them. The English-speaking and Spanish-speaking countries comprise some two-fifths of the inhabited globe. "Of all western languages, Spanish is spoken by more people than any other, excepting our own," and Spanish is therefore the world's natural second language. It is the easiest European language to learn. Its pronunciation is almost phonetic and it has a rich and living culture, comparable to any other in Europe. Politically and commercially, as the language of the rich and growing South American republics, the importance of Spanish increases, and the United States are far more awake to this factor than ourselves. In the U.S.A. Spanish is widely taught in schools and at universities; rich, active and prosperous learned societies support Spanish scholarship and research of all kinds. What do we do in England, with our great trading and cultural bonds with South America? Next to nothing. In any one year, and taking the London University examiners alone, we have no more than 200 entries in Spanish for the school certificate, compared with 2,000 in German and 14,000 in French. And there, of course, Mr. Peers sees the arch-enemy: the French monopoly.

Of course, if we were counting heads, square miles and the golden promise of the future, it is evident that Russian, Chinese and the Indian languages ought to be taught in our schools before any others. But Mr. Peers is not thinking merely in numbers, nor in terms of commercial utility. He is attacking the dominance of French culture, as every Hispanophile sooner or later does. In Spain and Italy there has always been a strong Francophobia, and Mr. Peers sympathises, but adds his own reason for modifying our addiction to French in the schools:

> . . French came to be adopted as the modern foreign language to be taught in our schools without the giving of a thought to its suitability. And in reality French is a most unsuitable language for children who are poor or indifferent linguists. It is excellent—it cannot be surpassed—as a second language for the intelligent child, and as a first language for children of the highest mental type. But to force every second scholar to learn it is to make success impossible.

"Unsuitable" because it is difficult to pronounce and because its literature is for the mature.

For that matter, is it any use teaching any living foreign language to the ungifted pupil? It seems to me that Mr. Peers is unconsciously making the case for the dead as distinct from the living languages; if difficulty is the criterion, I come more and more to the opinion that the ungifted learn all foreign languages at the wrong age. Twelve is too early. Better wait till eighteen or twenty, when you can learn in a year what will take three or four years in the skimped classes of the day school. The ease of Spanish makes it a language for the man or woman of twenty. The bad results in the teaching of French are due to the shocking way in which it is commonly taught; but would Spanish be taught any better? To judge by the atrocious Spanish spoken by English people, Spanish is already in as bad a case as French. Mr. Peers makes a good point when he says that, from a schoolboy's point of view, Spanish literature is more real, direct, alive, dramatic and human than French, using these words in their simple sense. But the context of Spanish life and values is utterly at variance with our own, and much farther from us than the life of France. It is surely ridiculous to say that Erckmann Chatrian, Hugo, Dumas, Daudet, some of Maupassant, not to name a host of minor French writers who are commonly read in schools, are at a disadvantage when compared with their Spanish equivalents like Galdós, Valera, the modern Azorin or the old Spanish masters. It seems to me no disadvantage that French literature should surpass other literatures in its maturity and its capacity for abstract statement. I would have thought that those qualities might be commended to the minds of the average student. There are, of course, good reasons for increasing the teaching of Spanish, and I should greatly regret not knowing that language and the strange, dramatic and valuable light it throws on European history; but if we do teach Spanish the reasons for maintaining the dominance of French are all the stronger. We do not merely teach a language. We teach a habit of mind; through a language we teach history and inculcate beliefs. Through French we teach the meaning of Western Europe.

It was Salvador de Madariaga who pointed out that Britain and Spain stand in a very similar relation to Europe; they are on the outskirts of the Continental tradition, the two countries which chiefly look out on to the new world. They are eccentrics and, in one sense, too individual. They need the readjusting influence of the French mind, which has preserved the Mediterranean tradition and the achievement of Greece and Rome, and has given us the foundation of our civilisation. It is true that Spanish culture tells us more about the natural man alone in his relation to God and the universe than any other. But those who sought their spiritual sustenance from Spain alone would be going outside Europe for it; they would not know that the Reformation, the Renaissance or the French Revolution had any but a negative meaning. This is pleasing to medievalists; but, after all, the achievement of Western Europe is that it has developed a new kind of man since the Renaissance, a man equipped with an intricate social personality; and such a personality—as the Spanish civil war showed—has not been acquired by the Spaniards. Western Europe has been made by its collective will; Spain has never believed in a collective will, and while, no doubt, in anarchic times we may learn a great deal from the remarkable individuality of the Spaniards, we shall learn nothing of the sociable and self-conscious man. The dominance of French may have begun with political and imperial power, but it has remained because of its intrinsic quality, because of that gracious power of abstract curiosity and thought which are vital to modern life. Who are we to regret this influence when, moreover, we find that French is the second language of all Latin countries, and most notably so in South America?

By all means let us teach children Spanish; if the choice has to be made, let us teach them Spanish instead of the cumbersome and difficult German tongue, whose literature is far less rich and suggestive to us than Spanish is; but on no account let us break with the language which so melodiously and completely contains the civilisation we live by. More than any other, the average pupil, the kind of boy who grows up to have no public position, needs to know what it is to be a European. To make a kind of intellectual pariah class of people who know Spanish and no French is an insult to Spain and an attempt to make a serious and reactionary break with the European personality. More, not less, ordinary people need to be taught what that personality is.

V. S. PRITCHETT.

THE INDIVIDUALIST FARMER

The Farming Ladder. By G HENDERSON *Faber and Faber.* 8s. 6d.

Farming has suffered long from most of its articulate members being too romantic, too arty, too raw, too rich or too damned clever. Mr. Henderson rages through the temples of pseudo agriculture, shattering the idols. He preaches a crusade against baseless modern theories, calls for a return to the old beliefs allied to new learning, and, all the while, sweats his way from a beginning on a derelict farm to a fat income.

It is not for everybody to do what he and his brother have done. They were endowed with the most extraordinary devotion to work, springing from love of the land. They literally gave up their youth and early manhood to learning their craft, by practice, by books, and by talk and paper work at night. During that stage, they had neither holiday nor relaxation. But the lessons they pass on from that experience are as clear and true as the call of a plover on their own Cotswold uplands. The key to them is in three words—Work, Muck and Thought.

There is great value in the simple conducted tour through Oathill Farm, its stock, its soil, its buildings. Mr. Henderson has always something new to say about cattle, clover and corrugated iron. But it is in his attitude towards the state of our agriculture, towards Government controls, towards joint effort among farmers and towards youth, that the author is most stimulating, irritating, downright and instructive.

He is an individualist. He believes with all his heart that only the farmer himself can put matters right with British agriculture. His terrific self-confidence does not actually permit him to say that he could do the job himself, but he believes it. In fact, in a playful moment, he says he cannot understand why the Government doesn't ring him up when they have a problem to solve. Reading his book makes the idea seem good. Few will question his statement that "we believed then, as we do now, that the greatest tragedy which had overtaken agriculture was not the repeal of the Corn Production Act, under which prices were to be maintained and linked to wages, but the Agricultural Holdings Act under which tenant farmers were given freedom of cropping, or in other words freedom to rob their holdings, incidentally and inevitably robbing themselves in the long run, for the preservation of fertility is the first duty of all that live by the land." After rubbing in the lesson of diminishing returns, bankruptcy and worn-out land, he heartily damns the National Farmers' Union for calling for an arable subsidy and a reduction in wages when their slogan should have been "Make your farm so productive that you can afford to pay good wages, or teach your men to be so efficient that they can earn them."

On the other hand, the individualism of Mr. Henderson makes him intolerant of control. He cannot see the merits of such bodies as the War Agricultural Emergency Committees. He has nothing but contempt for the way they have instructed him to do this and that, remarking acidly that he had suggested it all to them. He fails to realise that all farmers are not like himself. Very many had to be driven and a great deal of hard, honest, selfless work has been done by the Committees, with little thanks, but with results that Mr. Henderson should, in justice, record. He is on safer ground with such things as the campaign to rear calves on substitutes and the Government's blind faith that paying an inspector a maximum of £650 a year will raise the standard of twenty-four different breeds of bull. He uses a chapter on farming during the present war to smack the Committees again for local bias, casual inspection and unscrupulous use of dictatorial powers. However, there is some powerful invective saved up for the unhappy Farmers' Union and a few nasty cracks for the Government Scrap your Stock campaign at the beginning of the war. Even the Ecclesiastical Commissioners do not escape untouched, but it is the Union that gets the full weight of the barrage. After summing up his results, the author asks: "Is it to be wondered at that we have never joined a Union that contends that 'world conditions are such that farming in this country cannot be self-supporting, and the policy of protection and subsidies has not been in operation long enough to bring about improvement in methods of weaker farmers?'"

Proper instruction of youth is Mr. Henderson's answer to the labour problem. He sees farm

labour as being in a transition period between the high, but badly paid, standard of old and the coming of—whatever is coming. The answer is properly taught youngsters, taught not only their craft but the deeper lessons of the husbandman. Youngsters shown that there is pride, not humility, in farm work and that a good life, a good wage and good conditions can be possible.

Mr. Henderson sounds self-righteous at times, but he has a habit of frustrating annoyance by proving that he is right. His most sweeping curses stimulate and some it it is good bell, book and candle stuff. But he shows how success can be had and, at the same time, a man keep faith with the great farmers of long ago who, in just the same way, held it to be their sacred duty to leave their country's soil a little richer when they handed it on.

HUGH BROADBRIDGE.

A RESPECTER OF WORDS

Sing High! Sing Low! A Book of Essays. By OSBERT SITWELL. *Macmillan.* 10s. 6d.

This book is not in the great, wistful tradition of English essayists, as typified by "Sir Roger de Coverley," "Elia," and E. V. Lucas. In its most distinctive and successful passages it is akin rather to the wider European Renaissance tradition of Bacon's essays. The standard English essayists tend towards an uneasy jocularity in their attitude towards words. They fall easily into a slight but irritating facetiousness, expressed in archaisms, Scotticisms or pointless periphrases. "London" becomes "this great metropolis" and its masses "the lower order of Britons." Lamb in his essay on "Poor Relations" having written "telleth" for "tells" cannot get back to the normal form of the third person singular and goes hiccoughing on with entereth, holdeth, looketh, offereth, and so on, for a page and a half. Augustine Birrell, an essayist very much in the great tradition, writes "twin adjuncts" when he means wings, and "bide a wee" when he means "wait a minute." These writers, whatever other merits they may have, lack respect for the individual dignity of words. It often seems in fact that the essayist, though pursuing (compared with the poet or dramatist) an unambitious craft, is working under an acute sense of strain or peril which he attempts to hide under an uneasy mask of fustian, comicality or maudlin charm. And this perhaps is not strange, for the essayist at every step walks at the brink of a fresh abyss. If too learned, the essay becomes a treatise; if too pious, a sermon; if too gossipy, a "column."

A link between Osbert Sitwell and Francis Bacon is the effect that each can produce by mere lists. "The French marigold, flos africanus, cherry-tree in fruit, ribes, the sweet satyrian, herba muscaria, lilium convallium, the apple-tree in blossom," lists Bacon in his essay "Of Gardens." With the same feeling for the music of names Osbert Sitwell recites "Larranaga, Partaga, Estrella, Integridad, Cabana, Eldorado, Rey del Mundo, Santa Damiana," speaking not of gardens but of cigars.

The theory tentatively put forward in one of the present essays that the "sole Arabian tree" of *The Phœnix and the Turtle* may perhaps have been suggested to Shakespeare by reading a passage in Marco Polo, seems to fall to the ground when one refers to the only translation of the *Travels* that existed in Shakespeare's day. It so happens that John Frampton, the Elizabethan translator, omits the sentence about the "Arbre Sol." Personally I feel that in this instance Osbert Sitwell has slid into one of the abysses mentioned above, and has spoilt what would have been a delightful essay on the Person from Porlock (interrupter of Coleridge's Kubla Khan vision) by incorporating it into a piece of rather half-hearted literary research.

To give any adequate account of sixteen essays in one review is impossible; but the dignity of the following passage, describing a party of aged, pensioned eunuchs at a palace in Peking will show why I have contrasted Osbert Sitwell with those much-respected English essayists who tie playful pink ribbons to their prose:

> As I looked back I could distinguish in the distance the tops of the trees, so old, yet so intensely alive, producing these living hives of fragrance, living translucent clouds of snow and roses, dusted with powdered gold, and on the top of every flight of steps I could see, too, a decrepit dignitary of the extinct Empire, his robes of maroon or burnet causing the blue of the sky to vibrate more intensely. Each old man stood, outlined, motionless above the blossom, staring down at its frothy intricacies, waiting there with a certain solemnity, it seemed, and a proper sense of the occasion—for even to-morrow this perfection would be tarnished and it would be too late to form a considered opinion, even one day would have made all the difference; each old man waited, thus quietly under the immense blue dome, as though he were a watcher on a tower, or the guardian of an ancient shrine calling the faithful to worship.

ARTHUR WALEY

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

First Whisper of the Wind in the Willows. Edited, with an Introduction, by ELSPETH GRAHAME. *Methuen.* 6s.

The Wind in the Willows has a special place in children's literature. It is, and has been for more than thirty years, immensely popular in the nursery; it has also inspired a cult among grown-ups. Kenneth Grahame, who died in 1932 at the age of 73, never regarded himself as a professional writer. His working life was spent in the Bank of England, and he wrote only three short books—the first two (*The Golden Age* and *Dream Days*) for adults, and the last for children; and all three were fruits of a persistent emotion: "*It is not now as it hath been of yore . . .*"

In *The Golden Age* and *Dream Days* he re-created, as few other writers have done, the freshness of a child's vision; like E. Nesbit, he remembered with imaginative wholeness what it was to be a child. Later, when his own son, Alastair, was five or six, Kenneth Grahame discovered himself as a nursery story teller, and began spinning the bed-time serial—each evening an instalment of the adventures of Mr. Toad—which was later developed into *The Wind in the Willows*. The stories were not written down; they were a private bed-time game between father and son; and it was not until Alastair refused point-blank to go away to the seaside because of missing his nightly instalment of Toad's adventures that his father undertook to keep him informed by post, and wrote him a series of letters describing the outrageous goings-on of that conceited and volatile animal.

The boy's governess perceived the quality of these entrancing letters, and prudently sent them home to Mrs. Grahame for safe keeping. It did not, however, occur to anyone that they had the makings of a book until an American literary agent invited Kenneth Grahame to write something "on *any* subject and at *any* price he desired"; and the forgotten letters were brought out, revised and expanded into a book. (It is amusing to learn that *The Wind in the Willows* was turned down by Grahame's American publisher because it was not on the same lines as *The Golden Age*.)

Now Mrs. Grahame, as an act of piety, has published these letters in their original form, with a long and gently rambling introduction. The effect (at least on one who loved the book as a child, but has always been faintly embarrassed by the grown-up cult) is startling: for the letters are

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—Old Proverb

Hygiene and better living conditions have eradicated some of the worst diseases of the middle ages; medical science has discovered remedies for others. Yet one type of ailment has increased: nerve strain is more widely prevalent to-day than it was before our civilisation produced the modern complicated technique of living. And nerve-strain finds its expression in the nagging pains of every day — headache, toothache, neuralgia. To combat these pains is the function of 'Cogene'.

'Cogene' is a scientific combination of four pain-relieving drugs, in tablet form. It is non-habit forming and produces no harmful after-effects, yet it will relieve the most harassing nerve pain surprisingly quickly. That is why doctors prescribe it. It is sold by all chemists at 1/1½d. a tube.

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If you have no such account, go to a bank and ask the Manager to help you.

MIDLAND BANK

LIMITED

a great deal better than the book. Better, because simpler; all the life and humour and character are there, and the story moves richly from adventure to adventure, as a child's story should; and there is none of the fine writing which was introduced later, for publication; no long passages of poetical prose, no "Piper at the Gates of Dawn," no "Wayfarers All"—none, in short, of those parts which one generally skipped as a child, and which, in grown-ups, inspire either esoteric ecstasy or a faint feeling of embarrassment. What happened in the transformation stages between letters and book can be illustrated by comparison of almost any two parallel passages. Here, for instance, in the letters, are the preparations of the four friends, in Badger's earth, for an attack on the weasel invaders of Toad Hall:

> The Rat was still taken up with his arrangements, and continued running between his four little heaps, muttering "Here's-a-belt-for-the-Rat, here's-a-belt-for-the-Mole, here's-a-belt-for-the-Toad, here's-a-belt-for-the-Badger," and so on, so the Mole puts his arm through the Toad's and drew him into the garden, where he put him into a wicker chair and made him tell him all his adventures from beginning to end, which the Toad was very willing to do. Indeed, he not only told him everything, but I'm afraid he also told him several things which had not occurred; but they were all things that the Toad had intended to do, if he had had time.

In the book this has been carefully polished and extended:

> The anxious and laborious Rat at once resumed his preparations, and started running between his four little heaps, muttering, "Here's-a-belt-for-the Rat, here's-a-belt-for-the-Mole, here's-a-belt-for-the-Toad, here's-a-belt-for-the-Badger!" and so on, with every fresh accoutrement he produced, to which there seemed really no end; so the Mole drew his arm through Toad's, led him out into the open air, shoved him into a wicker chair, and made him tell him all his adventures from beginning to end, which Toad was only too willing to do. The Mole was a good listener, and Toad, with no one to check his statements or to criticise in an unfriendly spirit, rather let himself go. Indeed, much that he related belonged more properly to the category of what-might-have-happened-had-I-only-thought-of-it-in-time-instead-of-ten-minutes-afterwards. Those are always the best and the raciest adventures; and why should they not be truly ours, as much as the somewhat inadequate things that really come off?

Kenneth Grahame had a sensitive ear for prose; he was intensely conscious of the *chant intérieur* of composition, and (if one accepts some of the statements quoted in the introduction) wrote to please that faculty alone. Comparisons between the letters and the book, however, suggest that his aesthetic ear was not completely healthy. Whereas the letters are full to the brim with life and character—gentlemanly Rat, modest endearing Mole, responsible Badger, mercurial Micawberish Toad already at their zenith—the book on a comparative reading falls between two stools: between a nursery story that stands as a work of art, and the polished ethereal musings of a literary nature-lover. MARGARET LANE

BEHIND THE BATTLE

The Rights of Engineers. By WAL HANNINGTON. *Gollancz.* 3s. 6d.

It was the "battle for production" in the factories that enabled us to survive after Dunkirk and eventually to take a greater army back into France. In the process a new period of our industrial history began. Its implications are not yet fully understood, but Mr. Hannington's detailed study of the problems of the workers in the engineering trades makes a most valuable beginning. He is well qualified for the task; both his position as National Organiser of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and his long political career give him a shrewd sense of perspective.

Mr. Hannington begins by showing how the small craft unions have developed into the complex industrial unions of to-day. Naturally, he is most concerned with the part played by the engineers in this change, for they have frequently been in the forefront of the big industrial struggles and reforms—the fight for the ten-hour day, for the fifty-four hour week, and for the organisation of the semi-skilled and unskilled workers. This tradition continues. In January of this year the A.E.U. opened its ranks to women for the first time. Tracing these developments, Mr. Hannington recalls the great figures of the 'eighties, Mann, Burns and Tillet, and, finally, tells the story of how the A.E.U. was formed in 1920.

Mr. Hannington then turns to specific problems. Many people, especially those who have come into close contact with industry since the war, are puzzled by the complexities of its organisation, and especially with the status of shop-stewards. What lies behind their apparent divergence from the official union structure? Having explained this, Mr. Hannington drives his point home with a striking phrase and a moral. These "non-commissioned officers of the workers' army" should find their place within the framework and under the control of their appropriate union. He discusses their function in a way which provides any shop-steward with an excellent guide in his daily work as a union representative.

Workers will find particular value in Mr. Hannington's chapters on the Essential Work Orders and the various national wage agreements. An example of his thorough treatment—and of the practical value of his book—can be found in the six pages of questions and answers which he devotes to the ambiguous National Arbitration Award No. 326. It was this Award which caused widespread unrest in the engineering industry last year. Not even the Arbitration Tribunal seemed able to give a workable interpretation of this at the time, and some employers have attempted to use the confusion to evade the decisions of the Tribunal. This kind of evasion has gone on all

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Subscriptions must be made on the printed forms which may be obtained, together with copies of this Prospectus, at the Bank of England Loans Office, London, E.C.2 or at any of the Branches of the Bank; at the Bank of Ireland, Belfast; of Messrs. Mullens & Co., 13, George Street, Mansion House, E.C.4; or at any Bank or Stock Exchange in the United Kingdom.

BANK OF ENGLAND, LONDON, 5th August, 1944.

N.B.—Separate Prospectuses relating to 3% Savings Bonds, 1965–1975, to be held on the Post Office Register will be issued by His Majesty's Postmaster-General (and may be obtained at any Savings Bank, Post Office or Bank), and by the National Debt Commissioners on behalf of Trustee Savings Banks. The amount subscribed by any person under the Prospectuses issued by His Majesty's Postmaster-General and by the National Debt Commissioners must not exceed £1,000.

rough the war. Another example is given by
r. Hannington in his account of Joint Produc-
n Committees. In 1941 the A.E.U. conducted
inquiry, covering nearly 3,000 firms, into
e state of production, then far from satisfactory.
was greeted with hostility and suspicion by
ny employers, their Federation actually advising
em to have nothing to do with the inquiry. Yet,
Jack Tanner, the President of the A.E.U.,
marked:

When men in all parts of the country, and in
their hundreds, report in almost identical terms the
same stories of inefficiency and mismanagement,
we know, and everybody knows, that here are hard
facts requiring drastic remedies.

is union therefore supported the proposals
r establishing Joint Production Committees.
he employers still hesitated to admit the
rinciple that workers should participate in
ctory management. The Government was much
ore realistic and appreciated that the conclusions
the inquiry were inescapable. The Ministry
Supply took the initiative and, in February,
42, agreed to set up such committees in all
oyal Ordnance factories. This is Mr. Hanning-
n's only reference to the State as an employer.
serves to point his indictment of backwardness
d inefficiency on the part of many private firms.
ut as I think he would agree that the official
titude to labour problems in Government estab-
hments has been honest and enlightened during
e war, it is a pity that he says little about it.

No doubt, this concise and informative book is
imarily intended for engineers and trade
ionists; but it should be read by all concerned
ith or interested in the present condition and the
ture of industry and the British Labour Move-
ent. It is certainly one of the most important
ublications of its kind in recent years.

JEANNE MORLEY

harles Cameron, Architect. By GEORGE LOUKOMSKI. Adapted into English by NICHOLAS DE GREN. *Nicholson and Watson—the Commodore Press.* 21s.

Cameron is a highly interesting figure, of whom little known. A Scot, he was born about 1740 and died 1812. He studied architecture in Rome, published a book on Roman baths in 1772, and was ummoned to Russia by Catharine the Great in 1779. or her he made changes in the interior of the sarskoe Selo Palace and added a sculpture-gallery. e built also in the Cathedral of Tsarskoe Selo; d in the neighbourhood the palace of Pavlovsk ecently destroyed by the Germans); and palaces in e Crimea and the Ukraine. His style, like Adam's, erives from the Romans and from Palladio, and also ggests the colonial period in America. But the ussian environment and the opulence of his clients d him to exploit splendour of scale and material ith an Oriental exuberance. Columns of mauve pistachio porcelain, walls of opaque glass, Vedgwood plaques by the hundred, stucco much older than anything in Adam, gilded bronze, porphyry and whole pilasters of agate.

Unfortunately this book about Cameron is unworthy of its subject. Mr. de Gren, who purports to have "adapted" Mr. Loukomski's text into English seems ill acquainted with our tongue. In a book of only 100 pages that costs a guinea one does not expect to come on "barok," "Piccadily" and "Cariotides." Nor are the scanty facts very well arranged. It is to be hoped that when communication between this country and the U.S.S.R. becomes easier, a scholarly study of Cameron may be produced.

The Public School Question. By F. H. SPENCER. *Pitman.* 6s.

Dr. Spencer was for many years an Inspector of Schools and describes himself as "an aged proletarian" so that this attempt to sum up the Public School argument comes from the outside. It is a fair book, fair to the system and fair to the critics of it, and written without the heat which the subject commonly engenders. He lists six special claims which the system makes to excellence: Intellectual adventure, Religion and morals, Special capacity for leadership, Leadership in the professions, Standards of conduct, Scholarship and culture. Of these he only allows three, and them partially. The special claim to leadership he judges to have failed and admits that this disposes of their major claim. He allows their claims to inculcating a standard of decent behaviour and to providing leaders in the professions and in culture *in the second or third rank*, while their abolition "would seriously damage the manners of the upper middle class." If this were all, it seems too little to warrant the public support which the smaller schools will soon require. In fact, of course, the system has a political and social value which will seem to the conservatives worth preserving, if that is possible. It is quite possible; radical solutions are, as Dr. Spencer points out, less likely here than in most countries and this book may be most useful in persuading Governing Bodies that by coming within the National system, if they are forced to, they will not necessarily sacrifice their freedom.

The Economic Problem of the Peace. By WALTER PADLEY. *Gollancz.* 6s.
Liberal Plan for Peace. *Gollancz.* 3s. 6d.

For once, the titles of these books exactly state their contents, and in a sense, the fact that they are complementary. Mr. Padley, who tries to show the incompatibility of capitalism with any peace settlement, produces nothing beyond the slogans of the Independent Labour Party as a guide to the post-war world. The Liberals, on the other hand, have produced a careful blue-print of the peace their party would like to make without ever facing basic questions of power or the implications of the social revolution of which the war is only a part. Surprisingly, they come off best. Mr. Padley, who would claim to be a Marxist, has not yet got beyond ideas which were already ceasing to be first principles in 1917. The war, he says, is an imperialist war and the participation of the Soviet Union only partially and locally qualifies that view. From a brief and mechanical survey of the development of capitalist society to an equally dogmatic and unsubstantiated conclusion that a United Socialist States of Europe is the only possible and immediate step forward for its people, the facts are marshalled, and the witnesses called to establish this obsolete and unsatisfactory generalisation. It is a pity that Mr. Padley is apparently far more eager to be a good party propagandist than a useful and constructive writer, for in the course of his argument he more than once makes a good point—on, for example, the post-war economic position of Britain—which could bear more extensive discussion. Moreover, he writes easily and clearly. He is an able and earnest young man; but it is incomprehensible how a Socialist can write a book about this war and the forces which underlie it without seeing anything positive or hopeful in it apart from another opportunity for the workers of the world to achieve socialism in the grand nineteenth century manner. The Liberals, however, have gone to the other extreme and, concentrating on questions of machinery and principle, almost entirely ignored the fact that there is a major social struggle going on in the world to-day. There is a great deal of detailed discussion about post-war political and economic organisation in this plan, which can be read with profit by any one who is interested in trying to make the United Nations a going concern after the military part of their task is done. But it is all based on assumptions about the behaviour of nations, economic interests and individuals which are often highly rational and equally unrealistic. For example, the tendency of technical progress to even out national economic differences is attributed not to the need of each nation to avoid falling behind its competitors in efficiency and economic capacity, but to "the supreme tyranny of fashion": everyone wants to follow the example of the most prosperous country of the moment. Of course they do, but not just to be "in fashion." Nevertheless, the anonymous authors have produced a stimulating outline of some possible and desirable advances upon the old international anarchy which may attract some attention outside their own party ranks. In spite of what Mr. Padley would condemn as their superficial and reformist approach, at times they are much more conscious of the way the world looks and the direction in which it is going than he is.

Week-end Competition

No. 758

Set by Raymond Mortimer

Prizes of four guineas are offered for the best English versions of the following sonnet.

En quel fleuve areneux jaunement s'escouloit
L'or, qui blondist si bien les cheveux de ma dame?
Et du brillant esclat de sa jumelle flamme,
Tout astre surpassant, quel haut ciel s'emperloit?
Mais quelle riche mer le coral receloit
De cette belle lèvre, où mon desir s'affame?
Mais en quel beau jardin, la rose qui donne ame
A ce teint vermeillet, au matin s'estaloit?
Quel beau rocher de Pare, en etofe marbrine
A tant bien montagné ceste plaine divine?
Quel parfum de Sabée a produit son odeur?
O trop heureuse le fleuve, heureux ciel, mer heureux,
Le jardin, le rocher, la Sabée odoreuse,
Qui nous ont enlustré le beau de son honneur!

We regret that the report on Competition No. 755 has been delayed.

Accommodation Offered and Wanted

EGETARIAN diet, Wilts., chrmg. dble.-rm. offrd. Comf. quiet cntry. hse. Box A689.
ARGE furn. rm., double single, available. Share kitchen, bathrm., dining rm. Independent, informal hsehld. 'Phone. Box A981.
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UFFLEY/Bayford area. Yng. schlmaster reqs. brd.-res./hse. rent/buy. Box A990.
OULD anyone offer novelist, boy 3, infant girl and grandmother, rest doodlebugs 2 mths.; 2 rms., washing facilities, Salisbury strict? P. H. S., Cotswold, Freeman's Lane, ines.

To Let and Wanted

VI Century Essex cottage, 4 rooms, bathroom, garden produce, to let furnished, pt. 7th–29th. Gypsy caravan in orchard to d with cottage or separately, available other ths. Box A1001.
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ROUND floor and basement furn. flat to le: in Chelsea square. Three rms., bathrm., tchen, two double beds, near bus and tube. ox A903.

To Let and Wanted—continued

WANTED, furnished flat, cottage, bungalow or house, preferably Harrow, Stanmore, Bushey area, by R.A.F. officer and wife. State terms. Box A982.
WANTED, hse. flat (garden), respons. tenant, London (Hampstead pref.), purchase consid. Fothergill, 32 Old Burlington St., W.1.
WANTED to purchase house/cott., 4-5 bedrms., easy access Cambridge/London. Mod. convs. Some ground. Box A1013.

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RIGHT place for Left people. Honeymoons, Holidays. Brochure, Morris Lodge Hotel, Gong Hill, nr. Farnham, Sy. Frensham 362.
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LLANFAIR Talhaiarn, near Abergele, for bracing holidays, in peaceful Elwy Valley. Brochure. Mr. Rodwell, Glasfryn. Phone 214.
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GREEK Rest. White Tower, 1 Percy St., W.1. Mus. 2187. Open till 10 p.m.

Personal

CORNISH holiday: small party, informal, simple chalet accom. Bathing, walking. End Aug./Beg. Sept. Two vacancies in N. Wales party Aug. 19th. Box A896.
REPUTABLE publishers with affiliated companies having large post-war programme seek contact with other publishers and printers with quota. Also interested in copyrights, magazines, reprints, remainders, serial rights from publishers, authors and artists. Box A1022.
WILL Honor Frost please ring Mill Hill 1478 so that we may hear something to our advantage.
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WANTED. Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th: Children's, 10 vols.; Chambers' recent. Highest prices paid. Foyles, 121 Charing Cross Rd., W.C.2. Gerrard 5660.
PIANISTS—VIOLINISTS. Rapid Fingering. Flexible Wrists. Octave Playing made easy (pianists). Vibrato (violinists). Descript. bk., "Finger Magic," (2½d. stp.), Director, Cowling Institute, 59 New Oxford St., London, W.C.1.
QUAKERISM. Information respecting the Faith and Practice of the Religious Society of Friends free on application to the Friends Home Service Committee, Friends House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

Personal—continued

MODERN books wanted. J. Clarke Hall, Ltd., Wine Office Court, E.C.4.

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